

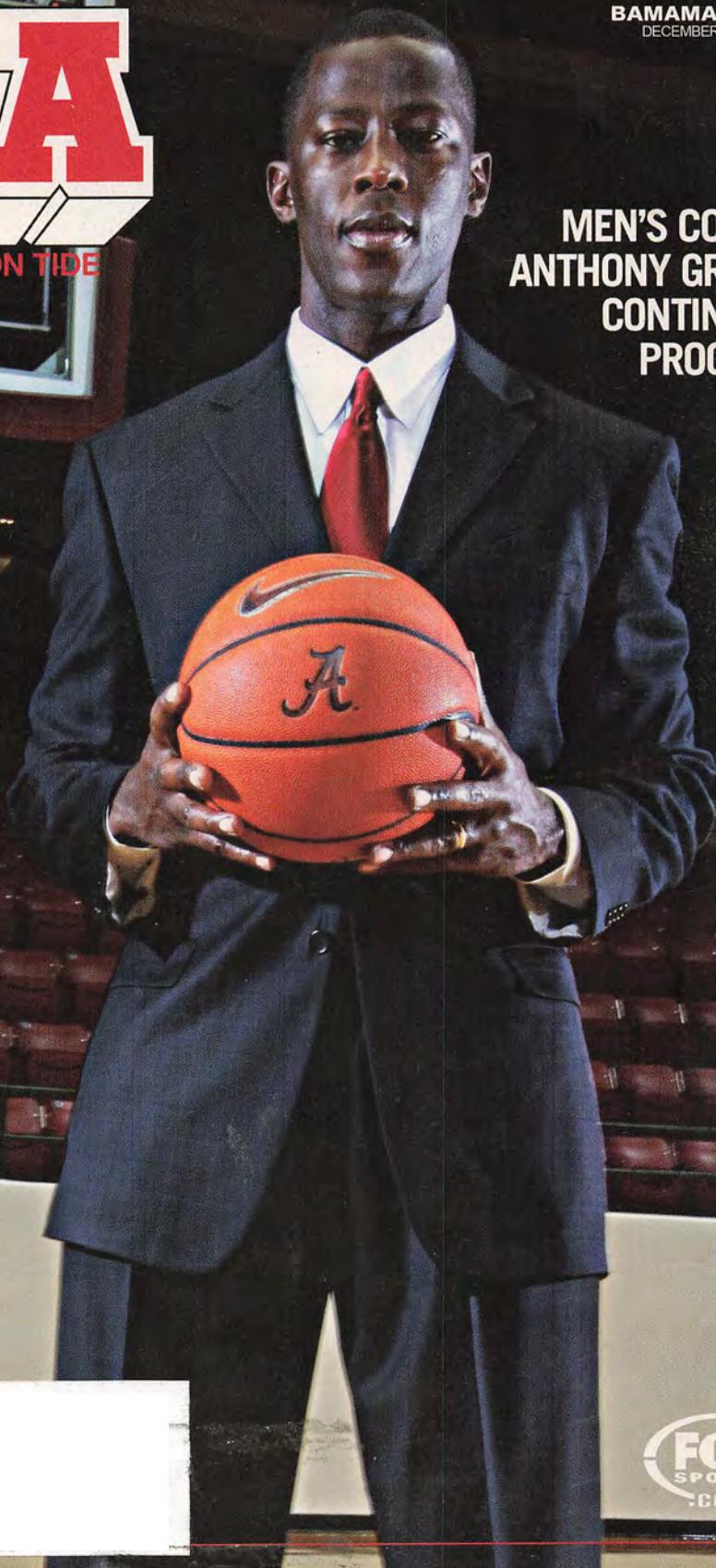
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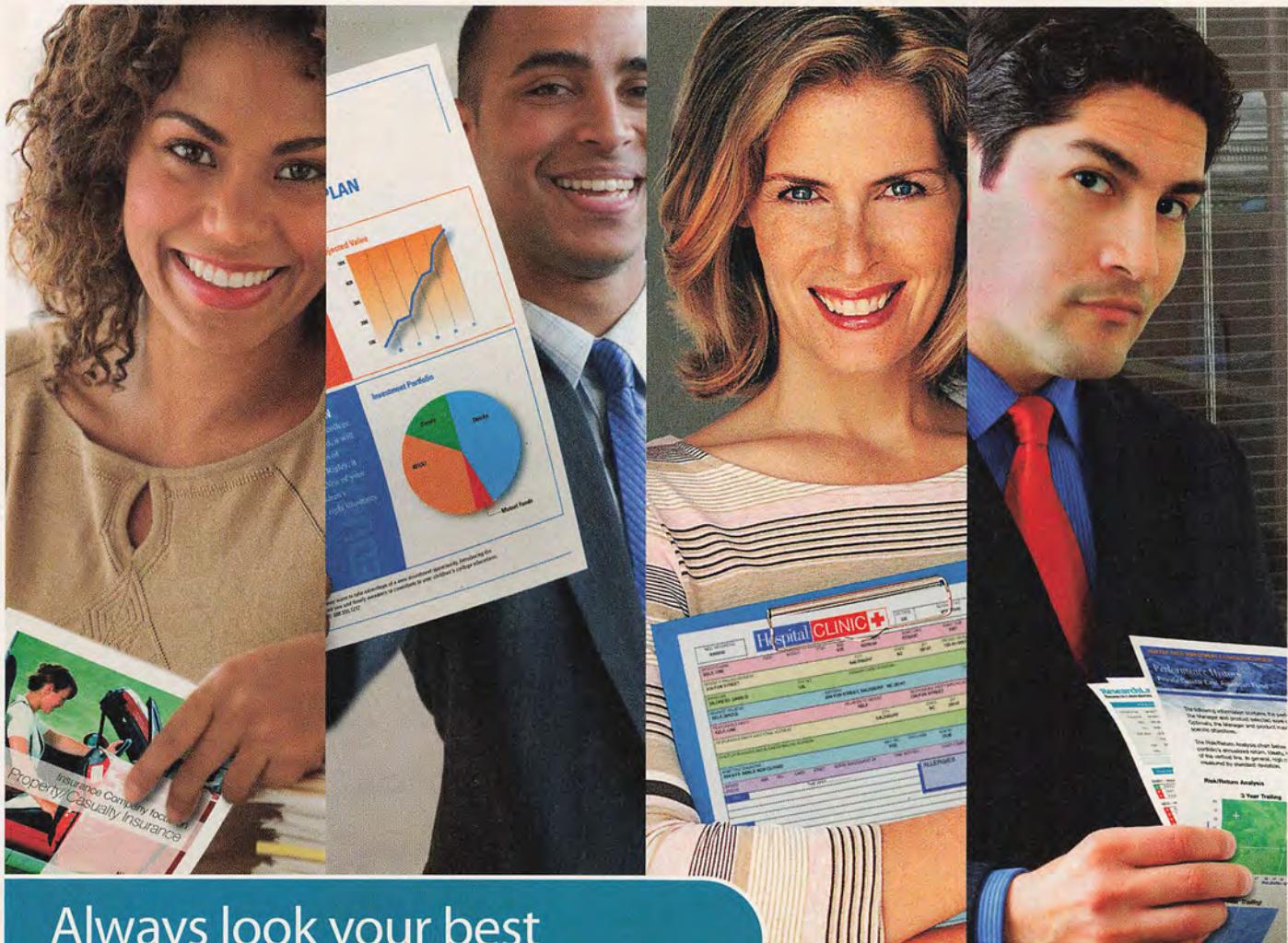


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Photos
STUART MCNAIR, BENJAMIN COHEN,
BARRY FIKES, BUTCH DILL,
CAMILLE SIZEMORE,
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Assistant To Editor
VERA DOWDLE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR FELLOW CRIMSON TIDE FAN,

After all these years I should be used to it, but I'll admit that I'm still surprised when I hear an Alabama fan say, "I hate basketball," or something along those lines. "What has basketball ever done to you?" I want to say, but never do.

I understand that insofar as athletics is concerned, Alabama is first and foremost a football school. Football isn't the oldest sport at The Capstone, but when Dr. George Denny became president, he determined that football could be important to overall excellence of The University. And he was right.

Surprising to many, Alabama men's basketball ranks second to Kentucky – albeit quite a distant second – in Southeastern Conference basketball success, including all-time standings and SEC Tournament records. Bama has a winning record against every SEC team except Kentucky and Arkansas (which came into the league in 1992).

Football and basketball have been somewhat intertwined. For many years Hank Crisp, best known as an assistant football coach, was the head basketball coach. As recently as the 1960s, Hayden Riley was head basketball coach, but his primary duty was serving as Coach Paul Bryant's top football recruiter.

C.M. Newton, who followed Riley, did not have any football duties, but football was often on his mind. Newton could complain that "Coach Bryant beats the hell out of them in the fall and they want to take it out on me in the winter." Newton built up the Bama basketball program so that more often than not Alabama was beating up on SEC opponents in both football and basketball.

I was surprised one day to hear Bryant tell about coming back from the Rose Bowl and getting off the train in New Orleans to join the Alabama basketball team. I pored over Alabama records and through old scrapbooks looking for Bryant's basketball record. Finally, with no success, I asked the famed coach about his basketball playing days. He said he never played in a game, that he was just on the team to help with practice "and to keep me occupied in the off-season."

It could be said that Bryant was not a great fan of basketball. He once said that the "umpire has too much control."

When Alabama received its first invitation to the NIT Tournament at the end of the 1973 season (a big deal in those days), Bryant made his way down to Newton's office for small talk. Finally, Bryant—who was athletics director and Newton's boss—said, "C.M., I've given you every chance to invite me to go to New York with you."

Bryant did go to New York. He sat on the Bama bench with Sonny Werblin, former owner of the New York Jets and future CEO of Madison Square Garden (where the tournament was played), and Newton made sure the officials were introduced to the visitors on the Alabama bench. At one point in the game, Crimson Tide trainer Sang Lyda had to direct Bryant back to the bench as Bryant moved to have a conversation with one of the officials.

Anytime Bryant was available, sports reporters wanted to talk to him. Asked at an informal news briefing why college football was so big, the coach said, "It's kind of hard to rally around a math class." That briefing came in New York when Bryant went to see Alabama basketball, and his reply is more memorable than the tournament.

Sincerely,

Kirk McNair

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'BAMA

INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

DECEMBER 2010 • ISSUE FOUR



BASKETBALL BY KIRK McNAIR

TIDE NOT AS NEW

Anthony Grant's men's team has experience

JaMychal Green is top returning scorer, rebounder

What's new for Alabama men's basketball? The good news is, not as much as there was last year. Coach Anthony Grant is beginning his second year as coach of the Crimson Tide after leading Bama to a 17-15 record (6-10 in the Western Division of the Southeastern Conference) in 2009-10.

"I think we said last year it was like a team of all freshmen because everyone was brand new to our system, to our staff, to our terminology, and as a staff we were brand new to them," Grant said. "This year we return eight guys who at least have an idea of our staff and philosophy. And we have five newcomers who have been getting a quick lesson in terms of what their expectations for our program would be and in terms of how we are going to play offensively and defensively."

"We learned some hard lessons last year, and hopefully we'll benefit from that experience. A lot of times players make the biggest jump from their freshman to their sophomore years, and for our returning players that is everyone. We improved last season, and I have been pleased with the attitude in the off-season. I told the returning players at the end of last season that how they worked in the off-season would determine how we do because they will set the bar for the incoming players."

Alabama returns four men with significant starting experience under Grant, led by all-star candidate JaMychal Green at an inside position. Green is a 6-8, 230-pound junior who was Freshman All-SEC two years ago. Last year, Tony Mitchell a 6-6, 210-pound wing player, was freshman All-SEC.

While those are two that would be considered players that Bama might be expected to build around, Grant said, "A big part of who we are as a team is that we are a team. I'll try to use all our players. The best teams have multiple weapons. We want to have balance, have a variety of guys who are capable of producing for us. So based on the opponent or maybe the situation in the game, guys can affect the game in a variety of ways, so I'm not going to restrict any of our guys by relying on one or two guys."

He agreed that Green and Mitchell "do have the ability to affect a game."

Alabama had two unexpected losses in the off-season when upcoming senior forwards Demetrius Jemison and Justin Knox elected to transfer.

The key loss for Bama, however, was point guard Mikhail Torrance. Torrance was not just a point guard. He was also the Tide's leading scorer at 15.6 points per game. It's not the most common question for Grant, but it may be the most important: Who will be the point guard?

The Tide coach said there were several capable, including returning back-up Ben Eblen, who averaged about eight minutes a game in relief last year. Grant said Eblen "has worked extremely hard."

Grant was particularly enthusiastic in discussing true freshman point guard Trevor Releford, a 6-1, 180-pounder who led Bishop Minge High of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, to the state championship. Grant said Releford "had an outstanding prep career. I think he has a chance to be a very, very good player. He has great leadership skills, too, and I'm excited about him."

Two combination guard newcomers are Kendall Durant, 6-3, a junior college transfer, and Charles Hankerson, 6-5. Grant said both can



play multiple positions and will add "more skill on the perimeter. I think we'll be very skilled at point guard."

But the big question concerns the most raw of Alabama newcomers, freshman post player Carl Engstrom of Sweden. Engstrom is 7-1 and 250 pounds. Grant said, "He's only played two years (organized basketball), but I've been very impressed with his work ethic and his desire to learn and get better. He's an athlete and he's a very intelligent young man. I'm excited about his future."

Alabama added another new inside player in 6-8, 230-pound Jason Carter. "He adds a lot of physicality," Grant said. "He can play inside and out. He has the ability to shoot the ball outside, but he can go inside."

The inside returning players, though, are the ones who will be most counted on. Green averaged 14.1 points, 7.2 rebounds, and 1.7 blocked shots per game last year. Also returning inside is Chris Hines, a 6-6, 227-pound senior. "Both those guys were integral parts of our team last year," Grant said. "I think both will benefit from the experience they gained playing in the system last year. I have been very impressed with both of them in terms of their leadership."

Still, the newcomers will have to contribute inside, Grant said. "We'll be somewhat inexperienced in the front court. I have excited to have the two we have back. (Engstrom and Carter) are going to

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have to play immediately, so there will be growing pains. But I think over the course of the pre-season and pre-conference play, the experience they gain will put them closer to being sophomores than freshmen."

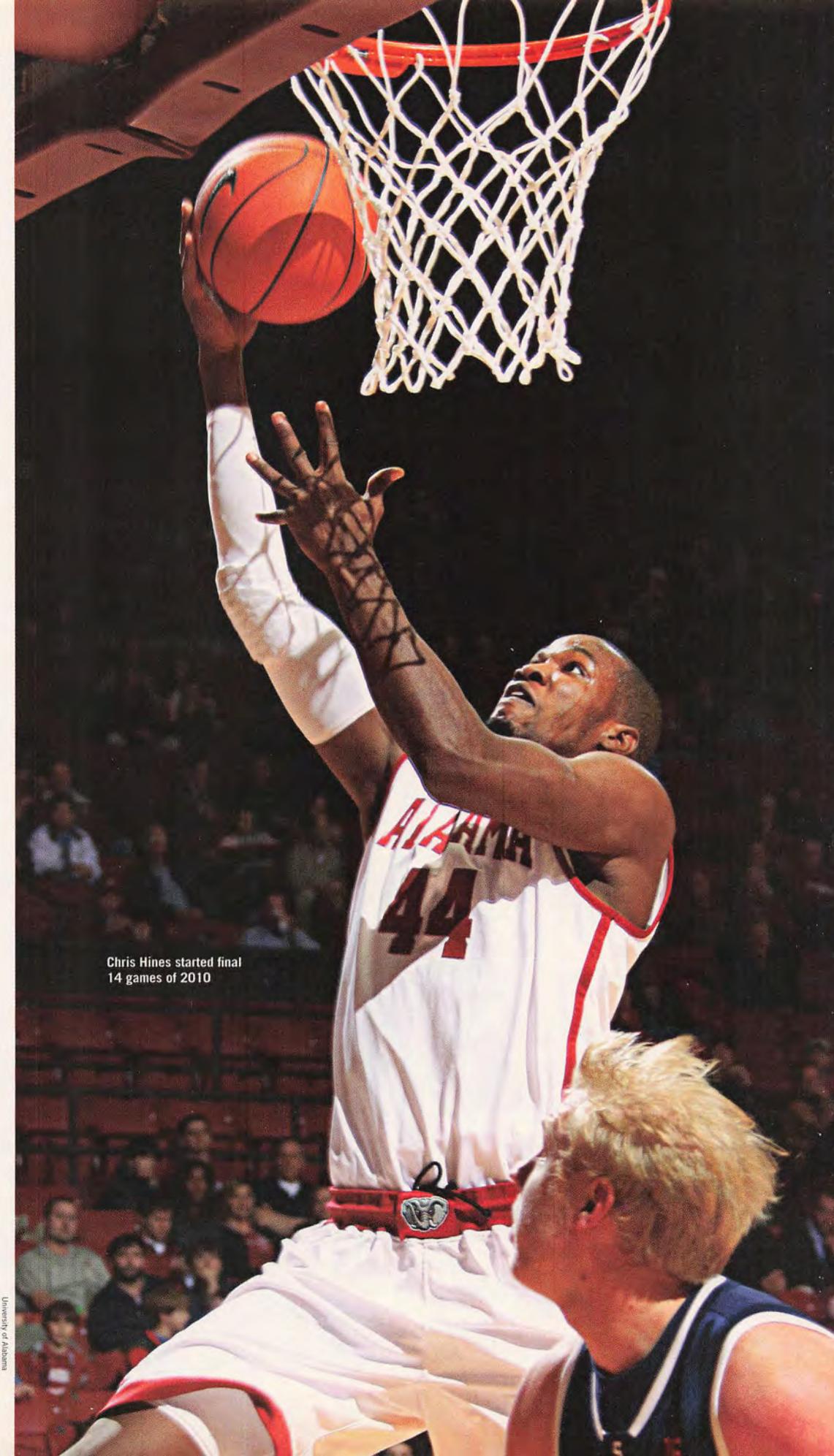
Alabama should be good on the wings. Tony Mitchell had a highlight film of athletic plays in his first year of college basketball as he averaged 9.2 points and 5.9 rebounds per game last year. He finished strong last season, being named SEC Freshman of the Week as he scored 13 points and had 10 rebounds against South Carolina, followed by 16 points and seven rebounds against Auburn. In the SEC Tournament against Kentucky, Mitchell had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Grant said that he believes 6-2, 195-pound senior Senario Hillman "has a chance to be one of the elite guards in this league with his athleticism and experience. We have really been impressed with his work ethic in the off-season. I think Senario is a guy who can change a game on the defensive end with his athleticism and who can be explosive on the offensive end."

Also in the mix at wing spots are returning players Charvez Davis, a 6-3, 186-pound senior, and Andrew Steele, a 6-4, 230-pound sophomore who missed last season with a foot injury. Davis has good shooting range and averaged 1.7 made three-point shots per game. In SEC play, he connected on 45.5 per cent of his treys. He scored 19 points against Ole Miss last year when he hit 5-8 three-pointers. He hit three of more treys in 10 games. Grant said Steele has made a good recovery. "He can give us some things at that small forward position," the coach said. "He is very intelligent and has a good understanding of the game."

JaMychal Green has been impressed by two newcomers. He works against Carl Engstrom. "He's the biggest guy I have ever played against," Green said. "He

Chris Hines started final 14 games of 2010



is a real 7-1. And he's getting better every day."

As for freshman point guard Trevor Releford, Green said, "He's a great ball-handler, maybe the best I have ever played with. I think he has a chance to make an immediate impact."

Grant said, "I think our senior leadership will be critical for us this year." He has also commented on the advantage of having players capable of playing more than one position.

The coach said that one walk-on from last season, Justin Luquiere, a 6-7, 225-pound senior forward from Indian Springs, is back, and that it was possible one or more additional walk-ons could be added later.

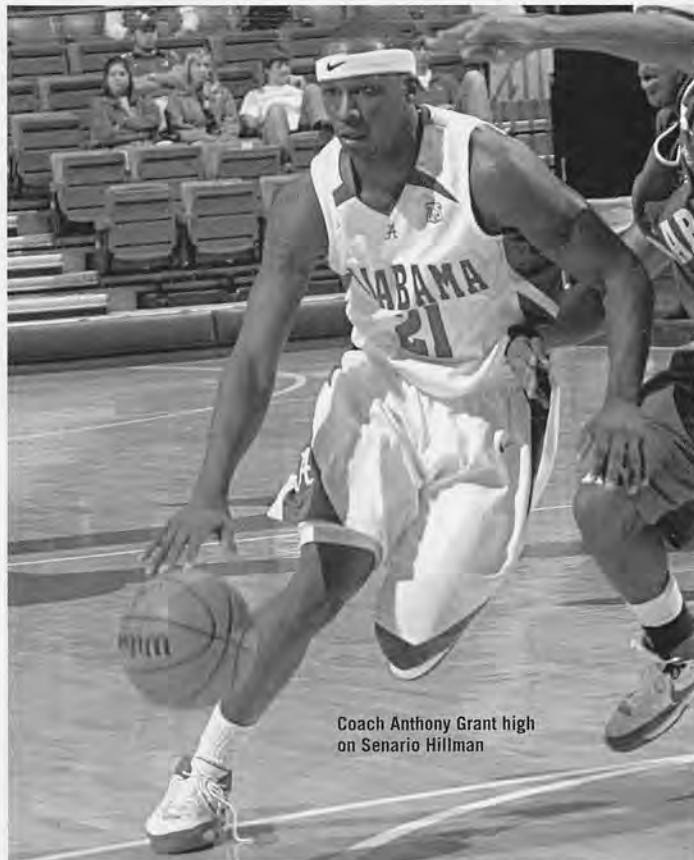
With seven returning scholarshipped players, five newcomers, and one walk-on, Grant has 13 players to work with. "That's important," the coach said. "Last year we had only nine scholarshipped players. Where it can be critical is in practice."

Grant said that he spends "a lot of time thinking about where we can get our team better and how we can improve as a coaching staff. The game is so mental. There are a lot of things we try to do to have our players and staff well prepared."

He said his job as coach is "to put the guys in position to be successful, to put them in a position where they can do what they do best and be successful."

Grant said that all of the 340 or so men's basketball teams that play in Division I have as a goal making the NCAA Tournament. "For us, though," he said, "it's more about the process—how we play, habits and attitudes we develop, the willingness to do the things required to win, playing to our identity, all the things we have to do to control the things we can control. It's about us, and not anything else.

"If we do those things, we'll see where it leads us." ■



Courtesy of Alabama

2010-11 ALABAMA MEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER

No	Name	P	Hgt	Wgt	Class	Hometown (Previous School)
1	JaMychal Green	F	6-8	228	Jr	Montgomery (St. Jude)
2	Charles Hankerson, Jr.	G/F	6-5	210	Fr	Miami (Coral Reef)
4	Carl Engstrom	C	7-1	250	Fr	Ystad, Sweden (Syndskanska)
5	Tony Mitchell	F	6-6	210	So	Swainsboro, Ga. (Central Park Christian)
10	Ben Eblen	G	6-0	191	So	Isle Of Palms, S.C. (Florida Air)
11	Jason Carter	F	6-8	230	Fr	Houston (Christian Life Center)
12	Trevor Releford	G	6-1	180	Fr	Shawnee Mission, Kan. (Bishop Minge)
14	Kendall Durant	G	6-3	185	Jr	Washington, D.C. (Weatherford CC, Texas)
21	Senario Hillman	G	6-2	195	Sr	Irwinton, Ga. (Wilkinson Co.)
22	Andrew Steele	G	6-4	230	So	Birmingham (John Carroll)
24	Charvez Davis	G	6-3	186	Sr	Montgomery (NW Florida)
44	Chris Hines	F	6-8	227	Sr	Evergreen (SW Illinois CC)
50	Justin Luquiere	F	6-7	225	Sr	Indian Springs (Jeff State)

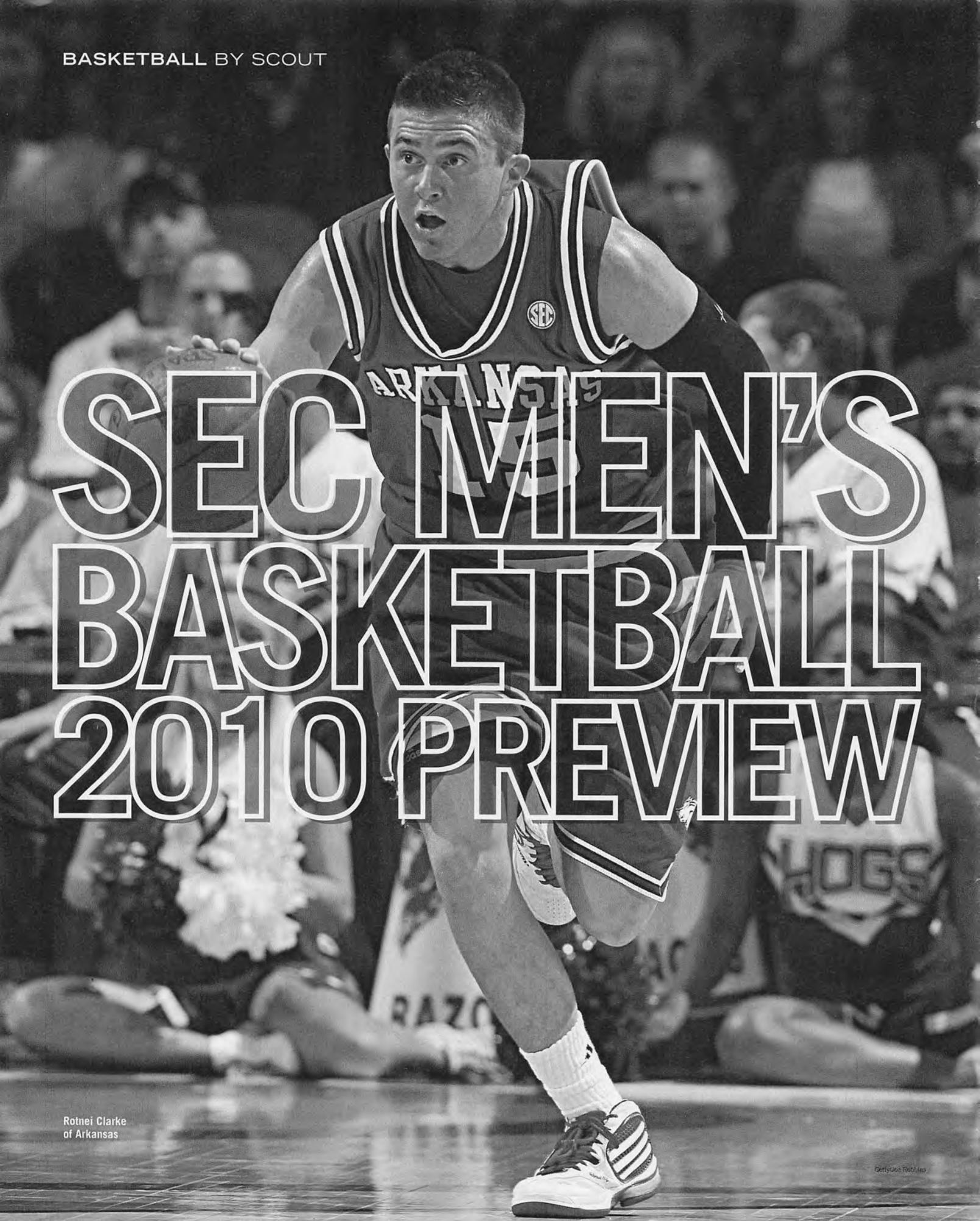
Head Coach: Anthony Grant (Second year, 17-15)

Associate Head Coach: John Brannen

Assistant Coaches: Dan Hipsher and Tony Pujol

Director of Operations: Antoine Pettway

BASKETBALL BY SCOUT



SEC MEN'S BASKETBALL 2010 PREVIEW

Rotnei Clarke
of Arkansas

The Scout.com Southeastern Conference publishers provide insider looks at the league's 12 basketball programs entering the 2010-11 season

Although the Southeastern Conference is known as the nation's best in football, no one can overlook the strength of the SEC in most other sports, including men's basketball. Will the SEC be as strong this year as it has been in the past, or is it something of a rebuilding year?

Almost everyone thinks that the league will have balance, but the usual suspects are expected to be the leading contenders.

Scout.com went to its publishers at each SEC school for a comprehensive pre-season SEC men's basketball preview.

Western Division

ALABAMA

By Kirk McNair, 'BAMA Magazine/BamaMag.com

When Anthony Grant's first season as Alabama men's basketball coach ended with a six-point loss to No. 2 Kentucky in the Southeastern Conference basketball tournament, the consensus was that the Crimson Tide wasn't a very talented team, but it had been one that had shown good effort, improvement, and hope for the future.

The future probably is not now.

The rebuilding process for Grant and Bama has far to go before there are reasonable championship aspirations. This year the Crimson Tide has a couple of men who could play for most teams, a few who could grow to that stature, and quite a few question marks.

Alabama was 17-15 last year, including a 6-10 SEC record (fifth in the West), and expectations would be for about the same this season.

Another expectation is that Alabama would be a tenacious defensive team. Last year, 13 of Bama's final 20 opponents scored fewer than 70 points. The final 20 opponents averaged 64.5 points per game, shooting only 41.4 per cent from the field. That 64.5 mark was the average of all SEC opponents, best in the league by nearly two points per game.

Grant does have an up-tempo team, man-to-man on defense, fast-break on offense.

This year, Alabama must replace the important point guard position, likely with a freshman. Mikhail Torrance was both more and less than what would be expected as a point guard in his tenure at Bama. He was adequate in the role of making those around him better and distributing the ball, and much above average for a point guard as a scorer. In fact, he was the Tide's leading scorer, averaging 15.6 points per game.

Sophomore Ben Eblen got limited duty last year, but most expect incoming freshman Trevor Releford to win the job. Releford led his high school team to the Kansas state title. Releford was a Scout.com four-star prospect, ranked as the 10th best guard in the nation. Grant also added a junior college combination guard in Kendall Durant from Weatherford Community College in Texas.

Alabama will be a mixed bag in the paint. The good news is the return of 6-8, 228-pound junior JaMychal Green, who averaged 14.1 points, 7.2 rebounds, and 1.7 blocked shots per game. Also back is former junior college player Chris Hines, a 6-8, 227-pound upcoming senior who took over as a starter for most of last season, but contributed only 3.7 points and 4.2 rebounds per game.

The bad news is that Grant was blind-sided by the post-season transfers of two inside veterans. Although Justin Knox (6-9, 240, 6.3 points, 3.7 rebounds) and Demetrius Jemison (6-8, 240, and out last season with a knee injury) would be considered only journeyman players, they were important for Grant's overall team depth. Now Knox is at North Carolina and Jemison at Manhattan. Grant was able to replace the pair with late signees, both incoming freshmen.

Jason Carter is a Scout.com three-star post player from New Orleans who played at Christian Life Center Academy near Houston. He averaged 14.6 points and 10 rebounds per game as a senior. More intriguing is the addition of Carl Engstrom, a 7-1, 250-pound former member of the Swedish Under 20 team that participated in the European Championships. The story is that Engstrom is a good athlete, but has been playing basketball only a couple of years and is raw.

On the wings, Alabama has good depth and experience. Senior Senario Hillman, an athletic 6-2 ballhawk, has a history of great plays (particularly steals, an average of 1.5 per game last year), but limited shooting ability (38.3 per cent). Sophomore Tony Mitchell (6-6, 210), an SEC All-Freshman player, averaged 9.2 points and 5.9 rebounds per game. Senior Charvez Davis (6-3, 186) played in all 32 games as a backup last year and averaged 6.0 points. He is a good outside shooter, connecting on 40.6 per cent of his three-point shots. Against SEC competition he made 45.5 percent on treys.

Andrew Steele (6-4, 230 sophomore) had been considered Bama's best defensive player, but he was lost to a stress fracture after starting the first six games of last season. The lone newcomer on the wing is freshman Charles Hankerson, Jr. (6-5, 210), a four-star prospect who was the Miami Herald 5A-6A Player-of-the-Year in 2009.

ARKANSAS

By Dudley E. Dawson, *Hawgs Illustrated*

Even before the University of Arkansas began practice this fall, optimism about the basketball team's future was as high as it has been in a decade.

That might sound strange considering the Razorbacks are coming off successive 14-win seasons. But it's John Pelphrey's recruiting – specifically a 2011 class that is ranked fourth nationally behind Kentucky, Duke and North Carolina by ESPN.com – that has the Arkansas faithful thinking about a return to glory.

"What John Pelphrey needed to get done, he and his staff went out and got done," ESPN.com basketball analyst Dave Telep noted. "The significance of this class can not be understated. He has put them in position to get back where Arkansas once stood in the basketball world and that's as one of the elite programs in the country."

Pelphrey, who took the program to the NCAA Tournament in his initial year, has actually put together a couple of good classes in a row.

His three recruits in the 2010 class – guards Ricky Scott (6-3, 195) and Mardracus Wade (6-2, 170) and forward Marvell Waithe (6-9, 216) – were all four-star players and are expected to have significant impacts this season.

Throw in the 2011 commits of five-star guards B.J. Young and Rashad Madden and a trio of four-star forwards in Aaron Ross, Hunter Mickelson and DeVonta Abron and Pelphrey likes what he sees.

Arkansas led the SEC West last season before faltering down the stretch. "We feel like we're very close to doing some things that we've done in the past as a program," Pelphrey said. "Proof is that we were so close with about two weeks to go in the season to compete in the West. Hopefully we can continue to show improvement."

After losing center Michael Washington to the NBA and point guard with leading scorer Courtney Fortson turning professional as well, the Razorbacks will be led this season by sharp-shooting junior guard Rotnei Clarke and sophomore forward Marshawn Powell.

Clarke (6-0, 184) was the team's second leading scorer at 15.1 points per game, knocked down exactly 100 three-pointers and shot 87 percent from the free throw line.

Powell (6-7, 220) was third in scoring with 14.9 points per game and his 6.7 rebounds per contest led the team. He started his school year in a boot because of a broken bone in his foot.

"Marshawn is a big part of our program," Pelpfrey said. "We are looking forward to him being as good as he was a year ago. Injuries are a part of the game and he suffered this while playing. We have the best staff in the country to help him return to the court and I don't anticipate this affecting his season."

Iowa transfer Jeff Peterson (6-0, 192) is the most likely player to start at point guard this season. He got a chance to get some game action in Europe this summer while playing for the East Coast All-Stars – a group that also included players from Kansas State, Purdue, St. John's, Notre Dame and Harvard, among others. He averaged 8.0 points and 7.0 assists during the five-game, 10-day tour while playing in Switzerland and Paris.

"It felt great to get back on the court in real game situations," Peterson said. "I felt a little rusty at the beginning but I was able to get back into game shape quickly. I am really looking forward to the start of this season, my first with the Razorbacks."

While Clarke and Powell are the only two full-time starters back, senior guard Marcus Britt (6-3, 198) and senior forward Jamal Farmer (6-5, 213) both logged 16 starts last season.

The Razorbacks are lacking in height, which means they are hoping that 6-9, 220-pound senior center Delvon Johnson improves from his junior season. Johnson will join redshirt junior Michael Sanchez (6-8, 230), Powell, sophomore Glen Bryant (6-7, 190) and Waithe as guys expected to play inside during the season.

Clarke will be joined by Peterson, Scott, Wade and sophomore Julyses Nobles in the backcourt and Pelpfrey plans to use his depth at guard to pressure foes.

"It will all start with pressure defense and we'll have to be fast in transition," Pelpfrey said. "If we can do those things than we will overachieve, and based on the attitude and work ethic of our players, I think we will have an opportunity to do just that."

AUBURN

By Mark Murphy, Inside The Auburn Tigers

A new facility, a new head coach and new faces are the featured items for the 2010-11 Auburn basketball team.

Coach Tony Barbee's Tigers moved into their state-of-the-art Auburn Arena in August. The new building will likely be the star of the season for Auburn with all of its star players from last year either graduated or injured.

Auburn must replace four graduated starters in point guard Dewayne Reed, forward Lucas Hargrove, shooting guard Tay Waller and center Johnnie Lett as well as the top reserve, center Brendon Knox.

The team's only returning starter, guard Frankie Sullivan, is

Auburn's New Head Coach Tony Barbee



recovering from ACL surgery and is not expected to play this season. That makes 6-5 sophomore forward Earnest Ross the leading returning scorer and rebounder with his modest averages of 2.8 points and 2.6 rebounds per game.

Sophomore post player Ty Armstrong, a likely starter, is also out for the season with an ACL injury.

Barbee is going to need help from a group of sophomores who got playing time last year--- walk-on point guard Josh Wallace, shooting guard Andre Malone and center Rob Chubb, who at 6-10 is the only center available for Barbee's first season. Kenny Gabriel, a 6-8 junior wing forward, is expected to push for a starting spot.

Newcomers include highly-regarded 6-6 freshman forward Josh Langford along with 6-6 forward Allen Payne, 6-2 guard Chris Denson and junior college transfer Adrian Forbes, a 6-8 forward. Payne and Forbes were former coach Jeff Lebo signees from last November.

Varez Ward, a 6-2 transfer from the University of Texas, is unlikely to be able to play. The guard is recovering from a serious leg injury while also trying to receive a hardship transfer waiver from the NCAA to make him immediately eligible to play. It's not certain if he will be cleared by the NCAA or Auburn's team doctors to play this season.

Auburn fired Lebo after his team's 15-17 finish last season and brought in Barbee

from the University of Texas-El Paso. The dynamic new head coach has been busy promoting basketball to Auburn students and fans. His work in that area is producing dividends with season ticket sales up dramatically.

With a lack of size and a lack of experience, look for Barbee to employ his up-tempo, pressing, dribble-drive style of play. "This is going to be a fun team to watch," he said. "It is going to be an interesting team.

"In the last four years when I was at UTEP, we were the biggest team around, in our conference, and really across the country," he said. "Going through some of the injuries we have had and some of the guys that we recruited that didn't make it academically (Shawn Kemp, Jr. and Luke Cothron) we are going to be one of the smallest teams I have ever been around. Every day I'm with the staff we are talking and brainstorming and doing what coaches do.

"We are all X-ing and O-ing on napkins and it all seems to work then," Barbee added. "We are just trying to find a way to be successful with one of the smallest teams in the country."

Forbes, Gabriel and Chubb are the only healthy Tigers taller than 6-7.

"We have one player who is over 6-9 in Rob Chubb so we are going to be a fun team to watch," Barbee said. "We are going to have to play a style that I like to play anyway, but I like to do it with bigger guys--- a fast paced, pressure-based defense where we are causing turnovers, forcing bad shots and getting down in transition and playing a fast style.

"What that leads to in wins and losses, that is hard to say," Barbee added. "Nobody is going to put expectations on my team higher than what mine can be. There is not a game on the schedule I look at saying we have no shot in that one. We are going to play hard, we are going to play fast and we are going to play fun. It is going to be an exciting style for the players and for the fans to watch so we will see what that leads to."

LSU

By Shea Dixon, *Tiger Sports Digest.com*

As always, there's good news and bad news to be shared.

The good news: it's not 2009, meaning that LSU can erase a nightmarish 11-20 year when the Tigers won just two Southeastern Conference games – and even those victories didn't come until the last week of February, after the Tigers had dropped 12 in a row to open league play.

The bad news: it's not 2009, meaning that LSU no longer has the services of Tasmin Mitchell. The team's lone senior quickly became Mr. Everything last year for head coach Trent Johnson, scoring a team-high 16.8 points and pulling down 9.4 rebounds per game.

Johnson is also without point guard Bo Spencer, who averaged 14.5 points in 30 games last season.

Chris Bass played in 31 games as a sophomore, and the 6-1, 185-pounder is expected to contribute off the bench again, especially since he's the only returning scholarship player who is a true point guard. Much is expected from incoming freshman Andre Stringer, the reigning Mr. Basketball in Mississippi. If the 5-9, 170-pounder can stay healthy, he should earn the starting nod.

Other guards include sophomore Aaron Dotson, freshman Ralston Turner and walk-on Daron Populist, who averaged 9.8 minutes in 16 appearances as a freshman. Dotson's freshman season wasn't what he envisioned; he averaged only 3.2 points a game. With depth at guard a serious issue, Dotson will need to spend the majority of the game on the court this season.

At forward the Tigers return Garrett Green, Eddie Ludwig, Storm Warren and Dennis Harris, and Johnson gets to use Malcolm White (6-9, 225) a Baton Rouge native who spent a year on the bench after transferring home from Ole Miss.

With Mitchell gone, Warren becomes key to LSU's success. Last year the 6-7, 230-pound junior broke out with 11.8 points and 7.2 rebounds per game, one of the lone consistent performers on both ends of the floor. Harris, a 6-11, 190-pounder whose length and range combine for a tricky matchup with smaller forwards, also had his moments.

Newcomers include Matt Derenbecker and Jalen Courtney, a pair of forwards who hope to earn early playing time. The Metairie Park standout Derenbecker averaged 25.5 points and 9.9 rebounds a game en route to Louisiana Gatorade Player-of-the-Year honors as a senior.

Short on big bodies last year, Johnson added a pair of centers to the squad in the offseason: 6-11, 260-pound Justin Hamilton and 7-2, 286-pound Andrew Del Piero. Their roads to Baton Rouge couldn't have been more different.

Hamilton was born in Newport Beach, Calif. and took his game to Iowa State from 2007 to 2009. Last fall, he started 31 games at center for the Cyclones, where he averaged 6.4 points and 5.4 rebounds. Del Piero was born in Houston and also spent the last two seasons with a college basketball team – as the tuba player in the band

(the LSU band, to be specific). When Johnson decided to add two walk-ons last month, he had little hesitation grabbing the 7-footer.



Will it all translate into victories – or at least something more respectable than a two-win conference finish? Much depends on the success of the incoming freshmen, and the rest will be on the shoulders of the big bodies like Warren and White. This team will be outmatched talent-wise in plenty of games, but solid coaching and error-free play could help this squad steal some additional wins.

MISSISSIPPI

By Ben Garrett, *Ole Miss Spirit*

Almost a year ago, Andy Kennedy was preparing to coach what seemed to be his most talented basketball team to date, featuring such prolific scorers as all-league candidates Chris Warren and Terrico White.

The media guide didn't side-step those lofty expectations, projecting 2009-10 to possibly be "the most profitable yet based on the pieces that are in place entering the season."

Kennedy was quoted as saying he had never been more excited about a team. Five full-time starters were returning, namely Warren, to lead one of the nation's top backcourts featuring talent and depth from top to bottom.

But as the season progressed, an enviable roster never quite jelled like Kennedy hoped it would. The Rebels finished with a 24-11 overall record, and were ultimately eliminated in the semifinals of the National Invitation Tournament in New York.

"We had a good group in that no one wanted to step on anyone's toes," Kennedy said. "No one would grasp the reins and basically say, 'You guys follow me.' Everybody was looking around and didn't want to take that next step."

The question of team chemistry, namely on the court between Warren and White, was mentioned often last season.

As quiet types, neither was particularly vocal when the team was struggling following a five-game, mid-season injury to Reginald Buckner, who was the team's only legitimate frontcourt presence.

"Last year, I thought we had a good group of kids," Kennedy said. "But the dynamic of the team never formed to the level I had hoped, for whatever reason."

With White's decision to enter the NBA draft, where he was ultimately taken in the second round by the Detroit Pistons, the scoring burden and leadership role has fallen primarily to Warren.

Ole Miss also returns solid role players in Zach Graham, Trevor Gaskins and Terrence Henry. Sophomore forward Buckner was named to the SEC All-Freshman team, while Nick Williams is a highly-regarded as a transfer from Indiana.

Warren, Graham and Gaskins were signed by Kennedy 2007.

"This year, based on how our roster's built, Trevor and Chris and Zach all came in together," Kennedy said. "They all have seen the dynamics of our team and how quickly those change. Hopefully, as a result, they'll take the reins and lead collectively."

The trio will be asked to mesh with five new players, including Mississippi natives, and incoming freshmen, Demarco Cox and Dundrecous Nelson. Steadman Short, Isaiah Massey and Donald Williams

are the others.

"One (Nelson) is a dynamic, athletic, scoring lead-guard. The other (Cox) is a scoring, low-post presence we haven't had," Kennedy said.

Short was the final coup, signing in mid-May, while holding offers from Maryland and Marquette.

"We picked up a huge get late in Steadman Short," Kennedy said. "He's 6-foot-9, 235 pounds and very versatile. He can guard multiple positions, as well as score inside and out. He's coming in here with a little more maturity, as well."

But the most important piece is Warren, who is quickly establishing himself as the team's leader.

"We're not really going to know (the chemistry of the team) until we're in those wars. But I like what I see as it relates to the personalities of this team."

Prior to Kennedy's arrival in March 2006, Ole Miss basketball had only seven 20-win seasons in its nearly 100 years of existence.

In the program's previous four seasons, the Rebels managed a paltry 17-47 conference record, zero winning seasons and zero postseason appearances.

Kennedy, meanwhile, has claimed three postseason berths over his tenure, along with three 20-win seasons and two SEC Western Division titles. His teams have gone 85-50, only one win shy of the school record by an Ole Miss staff in a four-year span.

But with the Rebels' rising success has come heightened expectations among the fan base. Kennedy knows it, too. Still, he feels no added pressure entering his fifth season, other than the pressure he puts on himself and his staff each and every year.

"I feel pressure every year," he said. "No one puts more time and energy into Ole Miss basketball than me and my staff. We understand that ultimately you're judged in getting to the NCAA Tournament. That's still our goal."

MISSISSIPPI STATE

By David Murray, Dawgs' Bite

During his dozen years, Rick Stansbury would have experienced just about every preseason situation the modern college game presents, right? Guess again. Going into his 13th campaign the Mississippi State coach finds himself preparing for not just a single season.

No, Stansbury is getting one team ready for the fall semester's games while awaiting another to arrive just in time for SEC season. The second State squad should also be a much better bunch of Bulldogs.

"There are some question marks where we're at and who we have right now, but when we get everybody we'll be OK," Stansbury said.

'Everybody' being primarily the pair of high-profile Bulldogs who can suit up after serving NCAA suspensions. Most notable of course is Renardo Sidney, the 6-10 prep supernova who has already endured an entire year's wait for eligibility. He will be eligible to play after sitting out nine more games, and give State perhaps the best all-around sophomore in the league. Maybe even the land.

"He's a guy that can create space and really, really score in the



paint," Stansbury said. "But, he has the versatility to play away from the basket and shoot threes. And I think one of the greatest abilities he has, he's a great passer."

Listing Sidney simply as a 'center' sells him short.

Sidney will have a companion on the bench early in the season. Point guard Dee Bost is sidelined through December 10 for academics; then an extra nine-game suspension for missing the NBA draft withdrawal deadline. As soon as the junior returns, though, he will take charge of the Bulldog offense and resume his drive for the alltime school assist record. Bost has 344 through two seasons and is a reliable scorer in his own right, averaging 13.0 points last season.

The hottest shooter though is senior wing guard Ravern Johnson. With 177 three-pointers through three seasons, he's taking aim at the alltime school record and is coming off a 13.2-point campaign. Johnson and Bost make up as potent a perimeter punch as any in the SEC, and expect added contributions this season from freshman guard Jalen Steele and reliable rotation senior Riley Benock.

While Bost sits, juco transfer Brian Bryant and third-year sophomore Twany Beckham will compete at the point. Beckham is one of three Dogs who missed all or most of 2009-10 with injuries. He played some backup point guard two years ago and brings

6-5 size to the backcourt. So does redshirt guard Shaun Smith, now healthy at last and ready to provide a physical scorer and defender to a backcourt that has lacked muscle and depth for a couple of winters.

Until Sidney is activated the low post is open with the graduation of all-time NCAA shot blocker Jarvis Varnado. Elgin Bailey's brief November comeback from a March ankle injury was cut short. Now the 6-8, 255-pounder is counted on to fill the paint as the most experienced post player available. He isn't a scorer, but sophomore Wendell Lewis (6-8, 240) might become one. Limited freshman experience gave him a taste of SEC competition and should prepare him to put his athletic gifts to use the second time around. Meanwhile 7-1, 240-pound Sudanese sophomore John Riek is still trying to get up to American game pace.

The wild card is senior Kodi Augustus, a 6-8, 220-pound forward who has swung from post to perimeter and back for three years. He can shoot, score, and board; what Augustus really needs is a well-defined identity to fit himself into the larger gameplan. If he can put all his abilities to their fullest use, Augustus could help carry the whole team through its opening weeks without Sidney and Bost.

Or, through the 'first' season for State. Stansbury doesn't anticipate any difficulty making the mid-year transition.

"Good players are pretty easy to integrate into what you're doing," he noted.

State has relied almost entirely on outside shooting and inside shot-blocking the last two years. Adding Sidney more than makes up for Varnado's departure on offense, and the Dogs ought to be more physical on the boards and defense overall. At least when they're ready for the "second" season.

"It's a lot of new pieces and new parts, we have to get them put together the right way," Stansbury said. "Right now it's a lot of questions. If we get everybody healthy we'll be OK."

Eastern Division

FLORIDA

By Jim Harvin, *Fightin' Gators Magazine*

With all five starters returning, each of whom averaged double figures in scoring last season, and one of the nation's top incoming freshman classes, expectations for the 2010-11 Florida Gator basketball team are higher than at any point since the 2006-07 season when UF was about to embark on its second of back-to-back NCAA Championship runs.

UF, 21-13 overall and 9-7 in the SEC a year ago, is coming off its first NCAA Tournament appearance since that 2006-07 team captured it all, and this definitely is the deepest and most talented squad veteran head coach Billy Donovan, entering his 15th season with the Gators, has had since then.

"I think the one thing that definitely stands out right away is that we're much more of a physical team," Donovan said. "I think we're a tougher team than we may have been the last couple of years."

In addition to returning their top five scorers in guards Kenny Boynton (14.6 points per game) and Erving Walker (12.6), forwards Chandler Parsons (12.4) and Alex Tyus (11.8) and center Vernon Macklin (10.6), the Gators welcome back their top three rebounders in Tyus and Parsons, who tied for the team lead with 6.9 rebounds per game last season, and Macklin (5.5).

Add in a strong freshman class led by 6-9, 225-pound power forward Patric Young from Jacksonville, the 13th McDonald's All-America signed by Donovan during his UF tenure, and it isn't hard to understand why UF is considered a serious contender for both the SEC East and overall titles as well as a squad capable of making a deep NCAA Tournament run.

The Gators will again boast one of the top backcourt tandems in the SEC in the 5-8 Walker, a junior who was a second-team All-SEC selection, and the 6-2 Boynton, a sophomore who came to UF as the one of the nation's top recruits a year ago and proceeded to lead Florida in scoring en route to earning Freshman All-SEC honors.

Scottie Wilbekin, a 6-2 combo guard, graduated high school a year early in order to accept a UF scholarship, and his late addition could pay dividends. With Wilbekin on board, Walker and Boynton, who each averaged playing almost 33 minutes a game last season and were physically worn down by season's end, will have more chances to get much-needed breaks.

In addition, freshman Casey Prather, a 6-6 athletic swing man who was a finalist for the 2010 Tennessee Mr. Basketball Award, can play guard or small forward.

With the return of Parsons, Tyus and Macklin, the Gators have a trio of big, experienced seniors. Parsons began last season as UF's sixth man but eventually worked his way into the starting lineup and was impressive over the final six weeks of the season, scoring 15 points or more seven times, including a career-high 29 points at Georgia.

The return of Tyus, who tested the waters of the NBA draft before opting to return for his senior season, is big. The 6-8 jumping jack had his best season as a Gator last year after basically playing out of position (center) for his first two seasons out of necessity. He seemed much more



Kenny Boynton
of Florida

comfortable at the power forward spot and showed a nice shooting touch from 15-foot range, hitting better than 50 percent from the field for the season while leading the Gators with 35 blocked shots.

Macklin, a transfer from Georgetown, got off to a slow start but by the end of the season was showing signs of being the type of inside presence Donovan was hoping he would provide. He converted a team-leading 60.7 percent of his field goal attempts and had 29 blocked shots.

Freshmen forwards Cody Larsen from Sioux Falls, S.D., a 6-9, 225-pounder, and 6-7, 210-pound Will Yeguete from Melbourne are also hoping to push for playing time, while 6-9, 217-pound sophomore Erik Murphy returns after getting some valuable experience last season.

"We've got to be a really good defensive team and really have to rebound," Donovan said. "Those things are going to be critical. I think a lot has to do with Vernon, Alex and Chandler being seniors, which helps. I also think Patric Young and Cody Larson, just instinctively, are physical players."

This year's schedule is another strong one, featuring non-conference battles with national powers Ohio State, Kansas State and Xavier in addition to an always tough SEC slate.

"I was certainly very proud of the stride and progress they made a year ago, but the reality is that we're a team that got knocked out in the second round of the SEC

Tournament, first round in the NCAA Tournament, and Kentucky and Tennessee on our side with Vanderbilt were clearly the better teams," Donovan said. "Kentucky beat us twice and Vanderbilt beat us twice and we split with Tennessee, so there is a lot of excitement with this group because of what's returning and what's coming in, but the reality is that this group has a lot to prove, a lot to accomplish, and a lot to get done.

GEORGIA

By Dean Legge, *Dawgpost.com*

The hopes of Georgia basketball fans were bolstered last season by the overall play of their team under new head coach Mark Fox – particularly at home. That performance, and the emergence of Travis Leslie during the season, has raised expectations for the Dawgs.

"We want to have expectations," Fox said. "I think that shows signs of progress. I think the fact that people expect things from our team shows that they are interested. This group has worked really hard. The expectations from the outside are not greater than we put on ourselves."

The challenge for the Dawgs this season will be winning more games on the road (the Bulldogs were winless while traveling in conference play) and challenging for a spot in the NCAA Tournament – an event that has rarely included the Bulldogs in recent years.

If the Bulldogs get to the NCAA Tournament, they will be led by All-SEC selection Trey Thompkins and Leslie. The duo combined to pump in more than 32 points a game, which was the top point production for a duo in the SEC last year. But those two won't have as much pressure on them due to transfer Gerald Robinson, who sat out last season.

"Gerald provides us with an element of speed and quickness we didn't have last year," Fox said. "We are deeper in the backcourt. I think you will

see that this team is a little deeper and more athletic and certainly more experienced."

Georgia's backcourt will feature

Robinson, Leslie, last year's point guard Dustin Ware and key backup Vincent Williams. Down low Thompsons will team up with Chris Barnes, Jeremy Price and newcomer Marcus Thornton to provide the Dawgs with size.

"Last year you went into the season wondering where we were going to score points," Fox admitted. "This year we come back with two guys who have proven that they can score – now we need to build around them."

If Georgia can do that the NCAA Tournament could be a likely destination.

Still, the road to respectability in the SEC can be a long one. While the Dawgs have improved in the talent department (and certainly in developing it), they are still learning how to win on the road, which will be critical for a tournament bid.

Fox's Dawgs had leads late in the game on the road at South Carolina, Mississippi State and Kentucky (among others), but fell down the stretch for one reason or another.

Kentucky will likely lead the charge in the East with Florida, Tennessee and Georgia right behind. The Bulldogs need to hold their own at home – they beat the Vols and Gators in Athens last season – and steal at least one of the three contests with those programs on the road.

The non-league schedule features no less than eight winnable games entering the season. An early-season fight with Colorado in Athens could be a good measuring stick for the Dawgs. Georgia's Old Spice Classic opener against Notre Dame is also intriguing. Fox and company could also tip off against Boston College, California, Manhattan, Temple, Texas A&M and Wisconsin during that event, which is Thanksgiving weekend.

The trip to Georgia Tech has been moved to early December, and Georgia will have a good shot to win that game once more this season.

But the Dawgs' SEC opener against Kentucky looms large. A win in that one might soften a difficult end of January, which has contests against Tennessee, Mississippi State, Florida and at Kentucky.

If Georgia's guard play improves it could get to the 10-win mark in conference play. That, in turn, would likely be enough to get the Bulldogs to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since the miracle run in 2008.

KENTUCKY

By Stephen M. John, Kentucky Sports Report

Whether you're a John Calipari fan or not, no one can say his inaugural season at Kentucky wasn't an exciting one. The former Memphis coach rode into Kentucky on a big white horse and brought with him a stable of talent that was arguably one of the strongest classes in NCAA history. The Cats finished as regular-season SEC champions, SEC tournament champions and reached the NCAA Final Eight with an impressive 35-3 record.

The season did not come without its costs, however. Five players from last season's team were picked in the first round of the NBA draft. Only two returning players, juniors Darius Miller and DeAndre Liggins,



have had significant playing time at the Division I level. Both are expected to play leadership roles this season.

Calipari responded to the player losses by bringing in another outstanding class. Six new freshmen are slated to join the Wildcats this season. Four of those players were ranked among the top five players in the nation at their position.

Terrence Jones (6-9, 250) was Scout.com's No. 2-ranked power forward and will be expected to fill the position of departing senior Patrick Patterson. Calipari believes Jones can handle the ball well enough to play the guard position at times.

"You want guys with size who can play like guards and with Jones that is what we will have," Calipari said.

Brandon Knight, a 6-3 195-pound guard from Ft. Lauderdale has the challenge of replacing John Wall at point guard. The No. 3-ranked point guard in the country showed he can put up impressive numbers during the Wildcats' summer Canadian tour. In three exhibition games, Knight led the team with 25 points and 8.3 assists per game and hit 19-of-21 free throws.

"He (Knight) is fast. He delivers the ball better than other guys I have had. Twenty-five assists and four turnovers in Canada was ridiculous," Calipari said. "It is usually 3-to-1, not 6-to-1. Brandon is a warrior."

Freshman Doron Lamb, 6-4 shooting guard also figures to get his fair amount of playing time. Lamb, who was ranked as the nation's fifth-best shooting guard last year by Scout.com, plans to make fans take notice. He averaged 23 points, six rebounds and four assists per game before picking UK over Arizona, Connecticut, Kansas, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Eloy Vargas, a 6-9 Juco transfer who originally signed with Florida and 6-5 wing player Stacey Poole also seek to carve out playing time. One recruiting service had Vargas ranked in its top 10 nationally coming out of high school. Poole helped his Jacksonville (FL) Providence high school team go 31-1 in his senior season.

With the players mentioned above, the Wildcats are hoping to make big noise in the SEC again and perhaps develop into a team that can make an NCAA Tournament run. And there is one more player who may be available to Kentucky and could make the difference between being a very good or a great team.

Enes Kanter, Scout's No. 1-ranked center, is a 6-10, 240-pounder from Turkey who already has NBA scouts standing to attention. Ranked among the world's best big men his age, Kanter has been the center of controversy since choosing to play at Kentucky. The battle escalated when the general manager of his Turkish club team told the New York Times that Kanter was paid about \$100,000 while playing for the club for three years.

Kanter's father says that team officials are trying to keep his son playing in Turkey as long as possible. He was quoted by USA Today as saying that officials tied to his son's Turkish team, "are trying to set an example with my son to coming generations in Turkey, so they can control and use the talent and youth any way they like to."

When practice got underway in mid-October, Kanter had not been cleared by the NCAA to practice with the Wildcats. With Kanter, UK is probably a national championship contender. Without him, the team is likely good enough to post 30 wins and challenge for another SEC title.

SOUTH CAROLINA

By Paul Stewart, GamecockAnthem.com

The South Carolina men's basketball team will try to continue to move forward after losing perhaps the greatest player in program history in departed guard Devan Downey.

The ultra-talented Downey was able to put one final stamp on the USC program last year, leading the team to a historic win over No. 1-ranked Kentucky, 68-62.

Also lost for USC was a talented group that included Brandis Raley-Ross and Dominique Archie, who lost almost all of his senior season to injury.

South Carolina was dealt another blow recently with an injury to guard Ramon Galloway. Galloway injured his foot in a non-basketball related incident, and will miss four to six weeks. However, Galloway should be back in early to mid-November to help the Gamecocks with the early part of their schedule.

Sam Muldrow and Lakeem Jackson lead the charge as the two returning starters, along with Galloway, Johndre Jefferson, Stephen Spinella, and Malik Cooke returning off the bench. All of those players should make key contributions, especially Galloway, who impressed with his blend of speed and big-play ability in relief last year.

Jackson, Galloway, and Spinella were key freshmen for last season's squad and earned valuable experience, especially Jackson, who became a regular starter. Muldrow tallied postseason honors from the Southeastern Conference last year, earning a spot on the all-defensive team along with Downey.

But it's not all about the returning players. Coach Darrin Horn and his staff built one of the more impressive recruiting classes in the country last year, and will look to use their talents to build on a team that finished 6-10 in the Southeastern Conference.

Guards Eric Smith, Brian Richardson, and Bruce Ellington could make early contributions, and they will be complemented by forwards RJ Slawson, Carlton Geathers, and Damontre Harris. The team returns just 41 percent of its scoring from last season, so these newcomers will be counted on to make big strides as players in the SEC.

Horn said recently that he hoped this "young, athletic group" would help "lay the foundation and continue to build the program." He also said that the fit between the younger and older players is going well and they should be able to help his team win right away.

The Gamecocks will face several big games in the early schedule. USC will play at perennial national power Michigan State on Nov. 16 and will also face a home game against the Clemson Tigers on Dec. 5. South Carolina will also play at Ohio State on Dec. 18 and face Boston College in Columbia on New Year's Day.

USC will begin its conference schedule at home on Jan. 8 against the Vanderbilt Commodores. South Carolina was the only team in the league to beat both Vandy and Kentucky last year, and hopes to use that momentum to knock off additional highly-ranked opponents this season.

Overall, the Gamecocks will look to reload quickly after losing the trio of Downey, Raley-Ross, and Archie. Although it will be no easy task, look for Darrin Horn to mix his returning talent with the deep freshman class to try to get it done.

While the Gamecocks lack a dominating inside presence, look Muldrow and Jefferson should continue to play tough defense and provide a consistent scoring threat, while transfer Malik Cooke tries to help out inside as well. Freshman Carlton Geathers will also help spell the big men inside. Jackson and Galloway will provide big-play potential while trying to be more consistent, as the freshmen try to grow up quickly. It will be tough to replace Downey, but these Gamecocks should play with the youthful energy and intensity that could translate into more stirring upset wins.

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TENNESSEE

By Randy Moore, *Rocky Top News*

Quality starters Wayne Chism, J.P. Prince and Bobby Maze are missing from a 2009-10 team that registered Tennessee's first Elite Eight appearance in program history, yet the returning Vols believe 2010-11 will be as good or better.

This optimism is based in part on the availability of five talented newcomers - Jerome Maymon, John Fields, Tobias Harris, Jordan McRae and Trae Golden.

Maymon is a 6-7, 250-pound forward who transferred in from Marquette last January after just one semester in Milwaukee. He will become eligible at midseason.

Fields is a 6-9, 240-pound senior center who transferred in from UNC Wilmington during the summer. The NCAA granted him immediate eligibility because his old school does not offer a graduate program in sports management.

Harris is a 6-9, 220-pound freshman who was rated the No. 1 power forward prospect in America by Scout.com last winter.

McRae is a 6-5, 185-pound freshman who might be the most athletic player on the Vol roster.

Golden is a 6-1, 190-pound freshman who projects to be the No. 2 point guard in his rookie season.

The five newcomers hope to blend quickly with holdovers Brian Williams, Scotty Hopson, Melvin Goins, Cameron Tatum, Renaldo Woolridge, Kenny Hall, Steven Pearl, Josh Bone and Skylar McBee. Williams, a 6-10, 270-pound senior, started at the end of 2009-10 and made significant strides. He is a superior rebounder whose scoring and shot-blocking skills need a lot of work. Hopson is a 6-7 streak shooter who averaged 12 points per game last season. Goins is a 5-10 point guard who can break down a defense and jump out of the gym. Tatum is a 6-6 wing who has been slowed by injuries throughout his career. Woolridge (6-10, 210), Hall (6-9, 220) and Pearl (6-5, 235) will battle Harris and Maymon for playing time at power forward. Former walk-ons Bone and McBee will compete for playing time at both point guard and shooting guard.

This may be the deepest team Bruce Pearl has had, which could bring a return to the run-and-gun game Tennessee played in the coach's first three years at the helm. Unless the Vols play better fullcourt pressure than last season's team, however, a more controlled pace is likely.

Tennessee may not get a lot of points inside, since neither Williams nor Fields is much of a scoring threat in the post. Hall, who is more skilled offensively, also projects to get some minutes at center. If Harris lives up to his billing, he and Maymon should provide a nice 1-2 punch at power forward. Tatum is the odds-on favorite to start at small forward, although Maymon also can play the position. Hopson returns for his third year as the No. 1 shooting guard.

Ultimately, the season may hinge on the play of Goins at the point. He has tremendous quickness and athleticism but has shown a tendency to play out of control. If he can eliminate that, this Tennessee team could be pretty darned good.

Not Elite Eight good maybe ... but pretty darned good.



VANDERBILT

By Don Yates, *VandyMania.com*

In 2009-10 Vanderbilt lived up to expectations in the regular season as the Commodores posted their best conference record (12-4) since the 1992-93 season and earned 23 victories overall.

However, in the postseason Kevin Stallings' squad was largely a disappointment after the team again failed to make it to the SEC tournament championship game and then was eliminated in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Thirteenth seeded Murray State's last-second shot ripped the hearts out of the Commodore players and ended Vandy's once promising season.

Despite the disappointing end to the season, Vanderbilt's returning players are determined to improve their game and their postseason play. "This year I think everybody is hungry and you can see it in everyone's body," said senior forward Darshawn McClellan. "This summer we put in major, major work and everyone looks great."

Junior guard Brad Tinsley echoed McClellan sentiments.

"That loss left kind of a bitter taste in our mouths but we kind of got a good taste of what it means to be in the NCAA Tournament and I think we can build off that," Tinsley said.

If the Commodores are to be improved they'll have to do so without their top two players from a year ago. The Commodores lost their leading rebounder, assist man and top two scorers from the previous season. Center A.J. Ogilvy (13.4 ppg, 6.2 rpg) opted for the NBA draft and is now playing professionally in Europe. Point guard Jermaine Beale (14.6 ppg, 3.1 apg) has graduated.

Despite the loss of Ogilvy and Beal, the black and gold cupboard is far from empty. Highly athletic Jeffery Taylor (13.3 ppg, 5.2 rpg) returns and can play either guard or forward for the Commodores. Talented junior forward Andre Walker (6.1 ppg, 5.4 rpg), who started 31 games last season, also returns. Junior Lance Goulbourne (3.3 ppg, 2.1 rpg), who can also play guard, and McClellan (1.9 ppg, 2.1 rpg) will provide depth at forward. Incoming freshmen Rod Odom and James Siakam will also compete for playing time at forward.

The 6-11 Festus Ezeli (3.8 ppg, 3.2 rpg) will likely take over for Ogilvy in the middle. Ezeli has a wide wing span and blocked 43 shots last season. However, concerns linger over his tendency to be called for fouls. Steve Tchiengang (3.4 ppg, 2.5 rpg), a very physical and tenacious player, can play either forward or center and will likely get more playing time because of the loss of Ogilvy. True freshman Josh Henderson will also provide depth at the post.

Perhaps the biggest concern for the Commodores is the point guard position which was vacated by the very reliable Beal. Tinsley (6.9 ppg, 2.8 apg), who played mostly shooting guard last season, is expected to fill the point role. However, if Tinsley falters the Commodores may go with incoming freshman Kyle Fuller who has good quickness and shooting ability.

At shooting guard Vanderbilt returns the very accurate John Jenkins (11.0 ppg.) who made 72-of-149 three-point attempts last season. Goulbourne will likely back up Jenkins but Taylor can also play at the position.

The Commodores have an upgraded set of opponents and early on will face Nebraska and either West Virginia or Davidson in the San Juan Shootout. In December, Vandy travels to Missouri and hosts Marquette and Davidson. There are also meetings with local rivals Western Kentucky, Middle Tennessee and Belmont before the SEC gauntlet gets going.

Ericka Russell
is outside threat



BASKETBALL BY KIRK MCNAIR

STIR SWELL

Women's basketball
has many ingredients

Alabama Women's Basketball Coach Wendell Hudson has an experienced team returning. In fact, the returning players have enough experience to know that they'd better not rest. Those veterans recognize that a handful of new additions are going to be competitive.

"We have a combination of good players returning and good players coming in," Hudson said. "We have the core of the players who contributed last year coming back and we have new players we think are capable of playing in the SEC."

"I can tell in practice how some of the older players are looking at some of the younger players and the attitude has changed as to what it's going to take. And the older players understand that they can't be tired, that they have to push themselves."

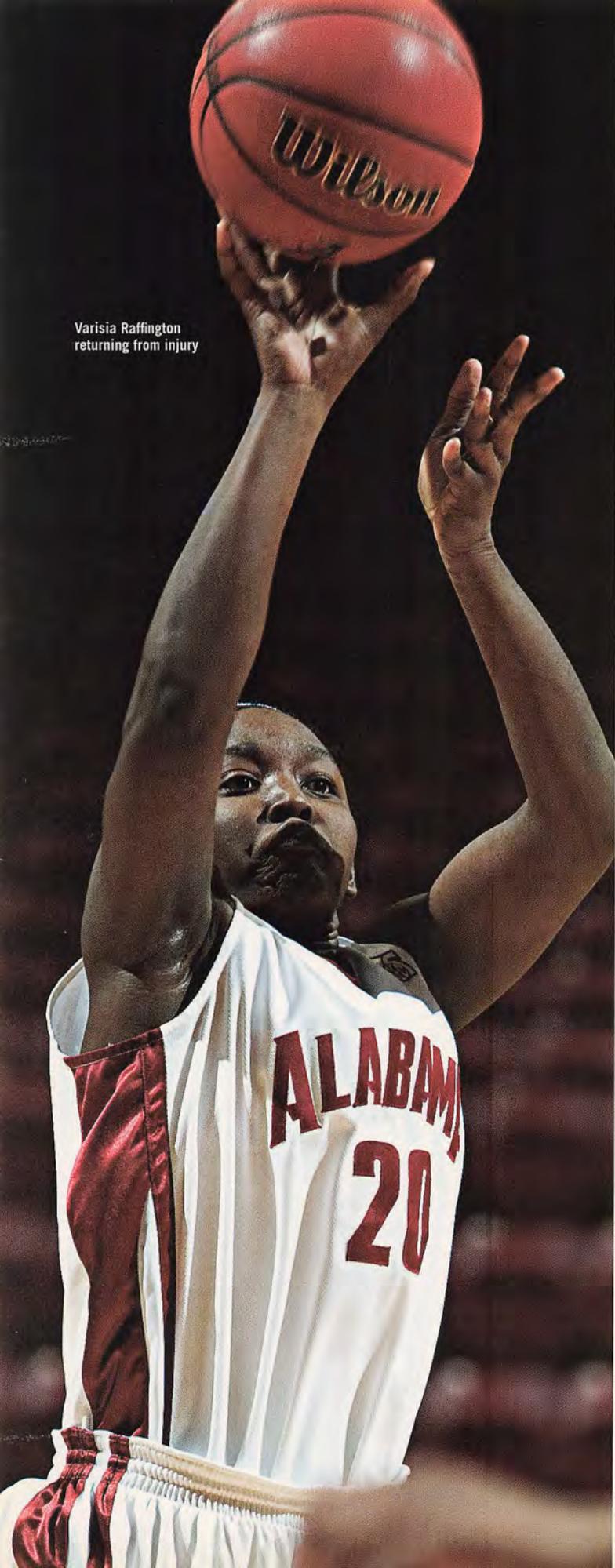
"This should be a great growing experience for this basketball program."

Alabama basketball had fallen down. Prior to the 2008-09 season, Athletics Director Mal Moore took Hudson, a former men's team All-America, out of administration and onto the court to revive the program.

"I think we made a lot of progress last year," Hudson said. "We won more conference games and we were more competitive in the conference. You could tell our players were committed to doing the things it takes to have a successful team."

There is still plenty of room for more improvement. Last year the Tide was 12-18 overall and 4-12 in Southeastern Conference games. But the Tide beat Auburn and won two SEC road games, which was definite progress.

Add to most of the starters returning Hudson's best recruiting class, including prep All-America Kaneisha "Kane" Horn, a 6-1 forward from Birmingham Ramsay. The new group includes four from high school, one transfer, and one from junior college. Alabama's



Varisia Raffington
returning from injury

signing class ranked ninth on the ESPN HoopGurlz 100 list, which is the highest ranking in the SEC.

Horn, the Tide's first McDonald's All-America, ranked fifth nationally. Other highly-ranked signees are guard Jasmine Robinson (65th overall and 17th guard) and wing Khristin Lee (23rd).

Hudson said that Alabama had not been getting the best players in the state of Alabama and his recruiting goal is to change that. "I don't like playing SEC teams that have players from Alabama," he said.

The good recruiting class notwithstanding, expect the Tide to be built around returning stars from last year, including seniors Tierney Jenkins and Varisia Raffington and junior Ericka Russell.

Jenkins, a 6-0 forward, led the Tide in scoring (11.6 points per game) and rebounding (9.1), becoming the Tide's 22nd member of the career 1,000-point club and breaking a record nearly 30 years old when she pulled down 27 rebounds at Belmont last year. She led the SEC in double-doubles last year with 11.

With her 33 points against Cal State Bakersfield last year, Raffington took over seventh place in single game scoring at Bama. Raffington missed the end of last season with an injury that did not require surgery, and she is 100 per cent.

Russell also cemented her name in the annals tying the most points scored in a single game by a sophomore with 30 against Georgia.

The Tide returns an additional five letterwinners from a year ago.

Hudson said, "Watching the early drills, what we are trying to do defensively and offensively, we are going to be able to play a different tempo. We will still be young, still learning, but as far as the talent is concerned, we will be closer to being able to play the up-tempo style of basketball we want to play. I think it will be fun to watch this team play. We will do things totally different from what we've done in the past in terms of full court pressure and getting up and down the floor.

Hudson talked about his top players.

"Varisia Raffington played very, very well for us last year, and then had a knee injury (after starting 18 games). She did not have to have surgery and has come back, she's 100 per cent, and looks very good. We were growing with her in the lineup, but we grew more without her playing when some other people had to play. We were really playing better in the last four or five games of the year.

"Ericka Russell has been as solid a player as we have had here and will continue to be.

"Carmen McCoy is getting better.

"Latoya King came into a system and came into the SEC as a point guard and she struggled a little, but improved.

"Tierney Jenkins is a senior who has led us in scoring and rebounding. You can tell that she and Varisia have realized this is their last year in college, and that they need to do things to be better.

"Another senior I think is going to help us this year is Katie Hancock because she played basketball this summer on a team that went to Mexico. You can tell her conditioning is ahead of where it was this time last year. She understands how to play. She had a knee injury early in her career, but she has gotten better and has learned how to work harder."

"Celiscia Farmer played well for us late last year, but over the summer had two surgeries. She was playing last year with a lot of pain. She's coming back healthy and we think she will be a really good player for us."

"I think the group we brought in comes with a lot of expectations. I don't want to put pressure on any one of them, but I think as a group they are committed to having the best program possible. That was the message when we were recruiting them, and they will be the group that gets this program turned around. They want to make a difference in helping get this program headed where

it needs to be, and you can see it in practice. They have a great attitude, they work well together with the older players."

Although she's not new, Erin Hogue becomes eligible this year after transferring from Samford and sitting out last season.

Three freshmen—Jasmine Robinson, Alabama 1A Player of the Year Shafontaye Myers, and Khristin Lee—will compete with returning starter LaToya King at point guard.

Returning shooting guards include Raffington, Russell, and Farmer. Myers may also see time at the off guard spot, and fellow newcomers Horn and Jasmine Robinson, along with senior Katie Hancock, can play the position.

Options at forward include Jenkins, Hancock, junior college transfer Alicia Mitcham, Hogue, and Horn.

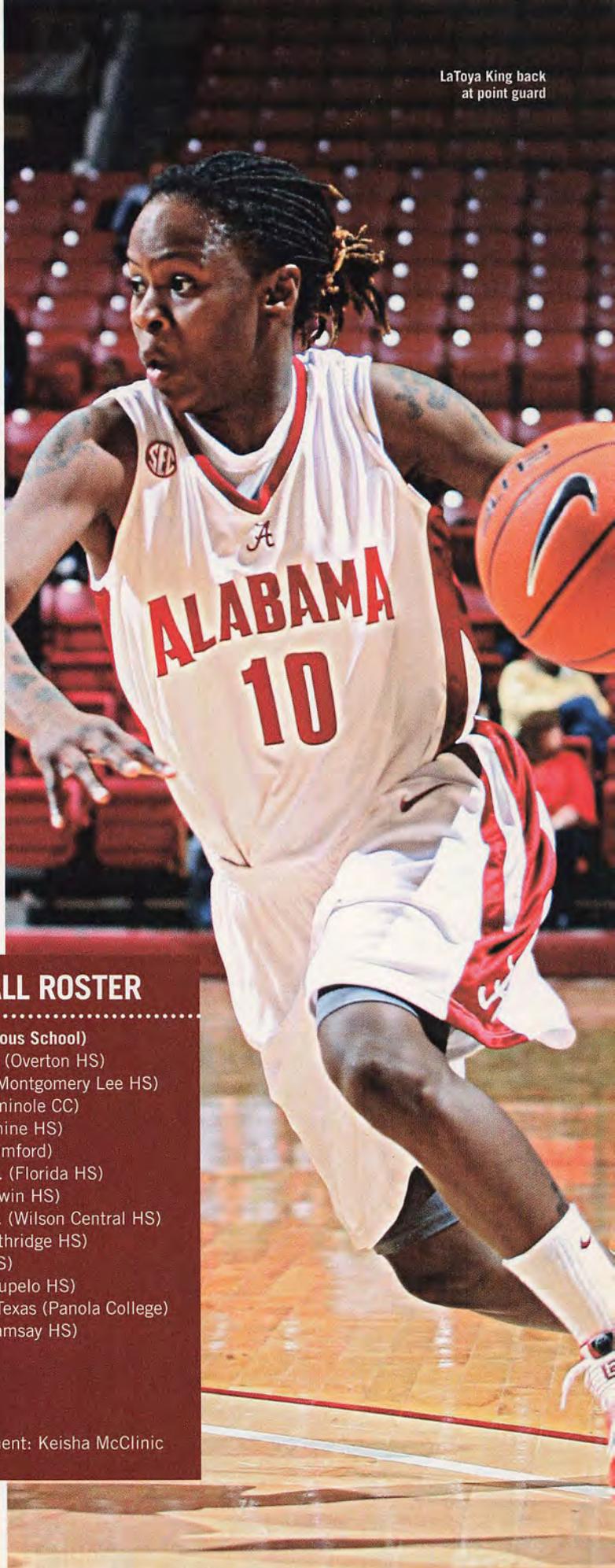
There is only one center, junior Carmen McCoy.

Hudson has rebuilt his coaching staff. "I moved Ty Evans to associate head coach. He was the first person I talked to when I got this job. We hired Leah Drury, who played here and then coached in junior college; and in the summer we had an unexpected opening and we were able to hire Robert Mosley from Ramsay High School in Birmingham. I think we've got a staff that works very hard and works very well together."

Alabama will move into renovated Foster Auditorium at some point this season, but no firm date has been set for the completion of the \$50 million project. "When it's finished, I think it's going to be really, really, really nice and really helpful to us in having a home court advantage," Hudson said. "It's going to help women's basketball, volleyball, and I think it's going to be a campus-wide attraction. I'm excited about the implications for our team. We have our own set-up and we'll have an intimate relationship with the fans. I think it's going to be the kind of atmosphere that will keep fans coming back and supporting our program.

"We talked to every recruit about moving from Coleman to Foster, and everyone of them and their families says, 'Okay, this makes sense.' A lot of times we play in arenas that are not suitable for women's basketball. Our players would rather play in front of a packed house in a smaller venue than that same number in an arena that makes it look like a small crowd."

LaToya King back at point guard



2010-11 ALABAMA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER

No	Name, P	Hgt	Cl	Hometown (Previous School)
3	Jasmine Robinson, G	5-7	Fr.	Memphis, Tenn. (Overton HS)
5	Celicia Farmer, G	6-0	Soph.	Madison, Wis. (Montgomery Lee HS)
10	LaToya King, G	5-4	Sr.	Stuart, Fla. (Seminole CC)
12	Shafontaye Myers, G	5-8	Fr.	Newburn (Sunshine HS)
14	Erin Hogue, G/F	6-0	Soph.	Birmingham (Samford)
20	Varisia Raffington, G	5-11	Sr.	Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida HS)
22	Khristin Lee, G	5-9	Fr.	Birmingham (Erwin HS)
21	Tierney Jenkins, F	6-0	Sr.	Mt. Juliet, Tenn. (Wilson Central HS)
23	Ericka Russell, G	5-7	Jr.	Tuscaloosa (Northridge HS)
30	Carmen McCoy, C	6-4	Jr.	Leeds (Leeds HS)
31	Katie Hancock, F	5-11	Sr.	Tupelo, Miss. (Tupelo HS)
32	Alicia Mitcham, F	6-2	Jr.	Balch Springs, Texas (Panola College)
40	Kaneisha Horn, F	6-1	Fr.	Birmingham (Ramsay HS)

Head Coach: Wendell Hudson (Third year, 25-35)

Associate Head Coach: Ty Evans

Assistant Coaches: Leah Drury and Robert Mosley

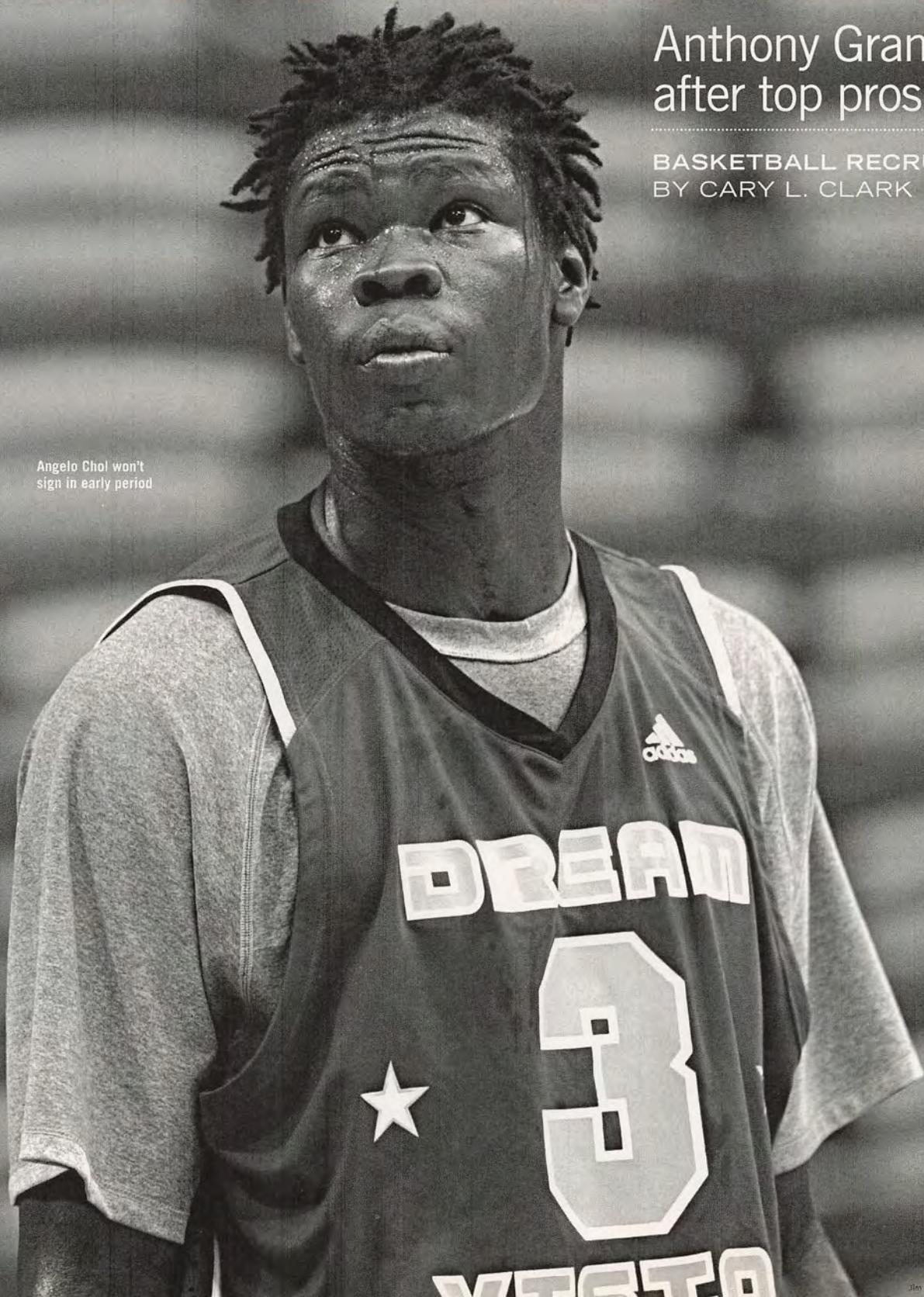
Director of Operations: Heather Mesalam Director of Player Development: Keisha McClinic

THINKING BIG

Anthony Grant
after top prospects

BASKETBALL RECRUITING
BY CARY L. CLARK

Angelo Chol won't
sign in early period



YET GTO

Jim Hawkins

The third recruiting class being put together by Alabama Basketball Coach Anthony Grant started with a bang, and it does not appear it will end with a whimper. Quite the opposite, if all cards fall where the Crimson Tide staff hopes.

In May, Grant landed verbal commitments from two of the top three seniors in Alabama (who were both still juniors when they announced). Levi Randolph, a 6-6, 175-pound combo guard from Bob Jones High School in Madison, and his friend Rodney Cooper, a 6-5, 196 pound small forward from Russell County High near Phenix City, pledged to Bama on the same night, and the public commitment board showed only those two names until early October. It was then that a team that had only had one seven-foot player in its basketball history got a verbal commitment from Moussa Guey (pronounced GAY), a 270-pounder from Senegal who is playing his second year of junior college ball at Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois. Guey averaged 11 points and nine boards for the Lakers last year. He has a wingspan of 7-feet, 5 inches.

Gueye said that his admiration for Grant and the way he was treated so nice when he visited Tuscaloosa were the keys that turned him to Alabama.

Once he arrives in Tuscaloosa, Gueye will give Grant two seven-footers to work with, as true freshman Carl Engstrom (7-1) is already on campus. The only other "seven-footer" ever to grace a UA roster was Rob Corney, a little-used reserve on the Tide's 1987 SEC championship squad. Corney, a New York politician, now lists his height at 6-10.

There are some other top prospects on the Tide's 2011 board. Any who commit before November 17 can sign in the one week early period that runs November 10-17. There is also a late signing period, April 13-May 18.

The top names on the uncommitted list include power forwards Angela Chol (6-8, 205) of Hoover High in San Diego, California, and Nick Jacobs (6-9, 250) of South Atlanta (Georgia) High School. The main competition for Chol includes Kansas, Washington and North Carolina, while Jacobs also is considering Georgia and Clemson.

According to Hoover coach Ollie Goulston, Chol visited Kansas on October 15 for the Jayhawks midnight madness festivities. He will then head to North Carolina on January 2, Arizona on January 29, and Washington on February 12. Chol, a Scout.com four-star prospect, visited Alabama in September.

"He's signing in the spring," Goulston told Scout.com. "He had already made that decision."

Jacobs is high on the Tide's list. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Grant had an in-home visit with 2011 target Nick Jacobs the night of October 4. Grant followed Clemson Coach Brad Brownell, who met with Jacobs earlier in the night.

The in-home visit with Grant came just hours after Jacobs had left Tuscaloosa, where he took his official visit the weekend of the Alabama-Florida football game, a 31-6 Tide win that featured an electric atmosphere at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Jacobs noticed. He told TideSport.com, "Everything caught my attention at Alabama. I highly enjoyed the trip. The football game against Florida was amazing. I loved the crowd. Alabama has great fans."

Then there is the interesting, hard-to-read case of Huntsville Butler High star Trevor Lacey, a 6-4, 190-pound guard who can

play the one or two positions. Kentucky Coach John Calipari is making a strong push for Lacey, but that hasn't stopped Grant from continuing to recruit him very hard. Lacey is not expected to sign early. He is also considering Auburn.

As would be expected, there are other prospects on the Tide radar. That list includes, but is not limited to:

Forward Rodney Hood (6-7, 180), Meridian (Mississippi) High School; guard Nick Marshall (6-2, 185), Rochelle, Georgia, Wilcox County High; guard Devin Langford (6-6, 180), Huntsville Lee; guard Shane Larkin (5-11, 150), Orlando, Florida, Dr. Phillips; and guard D'Angelo Harrison (6-3, 186) of Fort Bend, Texas, Dulles High.

The football recruiting adage that says, "Recruiting is like shaving. If you don't do it every day, you look like a bum" also applies to hoops scouting and signing. Knowing this, Grant and his staff are already in contact with many members of the high school and junior college classes of 2012, a list that includes:

Forward Hanner Perea (6-8, 210), LaPorte (Indiana) La Lumiere School, forward Shaquille Goodwin (6-8, 230), Decatur (Georgia) Southwest Dekalb; forward Ricard Gathers (6-6, 235), Reserve (Louisiana) Riverside Academy; guard Jaylen Beckham (6-0, 150) Newark (New Jersey) St Benedict's Prep; forward Damien Wilson (6-6, 198), Mouth of Wilson (Virginia) Oak Hill Academy; guard Michael Frazier (6-4, 180), Tampa (Florida) Plant; forward Justin Tuoyo (6-8, 205), Hampton (Georgia) Lovejoy; forward Brandon Morris (6-7, 195), Lithonia (Georgia) Miller Grove; forward Jordan Hare (6-8, 210) and what a story it would be if Bama signed a player with this name), Saginaw (Michigan) Arthur Hill; forward Dorial Green-Beckham (6-6, 220), Springfield (Missouri) Hillcrest; center Zach Banner (6-9, 310), Lakewood (Washington) Lakes; forward Willie Clayton (6-7, 200), Thomasville, Georgia; center Obij Aget (7-0, 200), Beckley (West Virginia) Mountain State Academy; and guard Fred Thomas (6-5, 180), Jackson (Mississippi) Jim Hill.

Thomas, despite the overtures of Mississippi State's Rick Stansbury and Ole Miss' Andy Kennedy, seems to like the school up Interstate 20 from Jackson in Tuscaloosa. The Crimson Tide has caught his eye, as evidenced by a recent interview Thomas did with Scout.com's Mississippi State site publisher, Gene Swindoll. Here's how that brief, but informative, Q&A posted on GenesPage.com went:

What are your strengths and some things you still need to work on?

"My weakness is I can't dribble that good and I still need to work on my rebounding. My strengths are I can shoot very good and I like to get to the basket."

How does playing AAU ball (for the Southern Phenoms) help your game?

"I get to play against better competition which allows me to become the best player that I can be."

What schools are showing interest in you?

"Mississippi State, Alabama, Georgetown, Ole Miss, and Georgia. That's all I know of right now."

What schools are you the most interested in?

"Alabama. I just like that school and have been wanting to go there."

It's hard to argue with that response. That's the type answer Grant and his staff hope to get from the majority of the prospects at the top of the recruiting boards for both 2011 and 2012. ■

STATES OF THE NFL

BY PETER SCHRAGER



The NFL recently released a study showing that the country's two largest states—California and Texas—had produced the highest number of active players in the league. Currently, 211 NFL players played their high school ball in the state of California, while 181 experienced the thrill and magic of "Friday Night Lights" in the fine state of Texas. Florida came in third with another 177 current pro ballers. There's a big drop-off to the next two states, Ohio (85) and Georgia (80). Louisiana ranked as the top NFL producer per capita (1 per 65,720); Louisiana ranks 25th in the U.S. in overall population but sixth on the list of states producing pro players.

But what about position by position? We've long heard about Texas and western Pennsylvania being quarterback hotbeds, but are they still producing the top future pros at the position? Miami is considered "Linebacker U" and Florida State's given the NFL Derrick Brooks and Ernie Sims, but is the Sunshine State still the top state for producing quality linebackers?

Let's break it down, going with the top three current players from the nation's top three states—quality-wise, not quantity-wise—for each position. Let the arguments commence.



CALIFORNIA

QUARTERBACK:

1. California: Tom Brady, Carson Palmer, Matt Cassel
2. Texas: Drew Brees, Matthew Stafford, Vince Young
3. Pennsylvania: Matt Schaub, Matt Ryan, Chad Henne

What Might Surprise You: When it comes to Georgia, the state isn't peachy for QBs. Of the four Georgia-bred quarterbacks drafted since 1998, only one—Seahawks backup Charlie Whitehurst—remains in the league.

DEFENSIVE BACKS:

1. California: Nnamdi Asomugha, Leon Hall, Dashon Goldson
2. Louisiana: LaRon Landry, Corey Webster, Ed Reed
3. Georgia: Champ Bailey, Dunta Robinson, Adam "Pacman" Jones

What Might Surprise You: There has been just one defensive back out of the state of Oregon drafted since 2000: the Steelers' Troy Polamalu.



RUNNING BACK:

1. **Florida:** Chris Johnson, Frank Gore, Clinton Portis
2. **Texas:** Adrian Peterson, Cedric Benson, LaDainian Tomlinson
3. **Arkansas:** Darren McFadden, DeAngelo Williams, Peyton Hillis

What Might Surprise You: Don't count on the Garden State for running back talent. Two backs from New Jersey—Knowshon Moreno and Donald Brown—were drafted in the first round of the 2009 NFL Draft, but they're the only New Jersey running backs drafted since 2000 who could be found on 2010 opening-day rosters.

WIDE RECEIVER:

1. **Florida:** Anquan Boldin, Andre Johnson, Brandon Marshall
2. **California:** DeSean Jackson, Steve Smith, Austin Collie
3. **Georgia:** Hines Ward, Calvin Johnson, Deion Branch

What Might Surprise You: Just three high school wideouts from the state of Minnesota have been drafted since 2000. One is Ryan Hoag, a 2003 seventh-round draft pick for the Oakland Raiders currently playing in the NFL. Another is rookie Eric Decker of the Broncos. The third? Larry Fitzgerald.

LINEBACKER:

1. **Florida:** Jon Beason, Keith Rivers, Jon Vilma
2. **California:** Lance Briggs, Clay Matthews, D.J. Williams
3. **Alabama:** Michael Boley, DeMeco Ryans, Karlos Dansby

What Might Surprise You: Cardinal Monty Beisel and Raiders outside linebacker Kamerion Wimbley are the only active NFL linebackers to be drafted from the state of Kansas since 2000.

FLORIDA

TEXAS

TIGHT END:

1. Texas: Jermichael Finley, Brandon Pettigrew, Martellus Bennett
2. Michigan: Antonio Gates, Chris Baker, Tony Scheffler
3. Colorado: Bo Scaife, Daniel Graham, Joel Dreessen

What Might Surprise You: Only one current tight end in the league played high school football in Washington, D.C.: Vernon Davis.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE:

1. Texas: Tommie Harris, Johnny Jolly, Casey Hampton
2. California: Justin Bannan, Sedrick Ellis, Brandon Mebane
3. North Carolina: Kentwan Balmer, Tank Tyler, DeMario Pressley

What Might Surprise You: If you're looking for defense, don't go to West Virginia. There hasn't been a single defensive tackle drafted out of the state since 1990.

DEFENSIVE END:

1. North Carolina: Julius Peppers, Chris Canty, Mario Williams
2. Alabama: Justin Tuck, Osi Umenyiora, DeMarcus Ware
3. California: Jared Allen, Lawrence Jackson, Travis LaBoy

What Might Surprise You: Aloha, anyone? Just two current NFL defensive ends played high school football in Hawaii: Ikaika Alama-Francis and David Veikune.

OFFENSIVE LINE:

1. Georgia: Marcus McNeill, Jon Stinchcomb, Jeff Backus
2. California: Logan Mankins, Sam Baker, Ryan Clady
3. New York: D'Brickashaw Ferguson, Willie Colon, Josh Beekman

What Might Surprise You: One major college doesn't have a home-field advantage when it comes to keeping high school offensive linemen in the state. Of the 13 offensive tackles taken in the NFL Draft since 2000 who played high school football in Florida, not one attended the University of Miami.

Mark Ingram rarely goes down on first hit



TALKING YAC

Tide ball carriers get more than their share

Alabama had a lot of memorable plays in 2009 as the Crimson Tide rolled to a 14-0 record and the national championship. Terrence Cody's dramatic block of a Tennessee field goal on the final play of the game to preserve a 14-12 victory. Marcell Dareus getting an interception and runback with a 360 spin move in the national championship game against Texas.

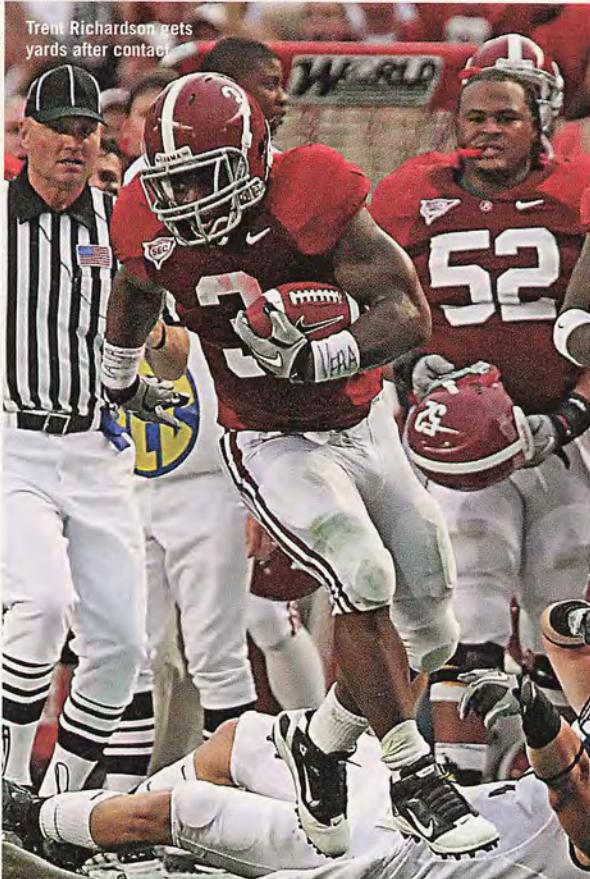
There were numerous big plays by Greg McElroy and Julio Jones and Javier Arenas and Heisman Trophy winner Mark Ingram.

Certainly in the highlight reel would be the 52-yard run by back-up tailback Trent Richardson. Alabama and Arkansas were locked in a scoreless game early in the second quarter. Richardson took a handoff at right end and was hit almost immediately by an Arkansas defender in the Bama backfield. Richardson bounced away. He was hit a second time behind the line, then at the line of scrimmage. There had been three broken tackles before Richardson had even one yard gained. There would be two more unsuccessful tackle attempts on the strong, fleet Richardson before he got to the end of his 52-yard run.

It's not just THAT he did it. It was when. That run broke the dam as Alabama rolled to a 35-7 win.

Those yards go into a special category: Yards After Contact, YAC for short.

Richardson said, "I'm a football player. That's how I run. I'm not ever going to let one man take me down."



Trent Richardson gets yards after contact

Bama's tailbacks—and some other players, such as big wide receiver Julio Jones—are adept at gaining yards after being hit by opposing defenders.

In Ingram's All-America season last year, he had a school record 1,658 yards rushing and caught 32 passes for 334 yards. Running Backs Coach Burton Burns calculated that of his 1,992 yards rushing and receiving that 1,075 came after contact. That's 54 per cent of his yardage.

Richardson gives a lot of the credit for Bama's players being able to break through tackles to Strength and Conditioning Coach Scott Cochran. "We take pride in our strength and conditioning program," Richardson said. "I love the weight room, and I love Coach Cochran."

Richardson had been more than just the man who broke Emmett Smith's records at Escambia High School in Pensacola, Florida. He was also a sure enough strongman, a state weight-lifting champion.

"Trent's one of the few guys that will actually come in and give the best he can every day," sophomore linebacker Donta Hightower said. "He's a great athlete, great vision. The one

thing that makes Trent unique is his ability to get yards after he's hit."

Last year as a freshman, Richardson had 751 yards rushing and 126 yards in pass receptions for total yardage of 877, and just under 50 per cent of the yardage was after contact.

Partly as a result of the YAC, both Ingram and Richardson have a high number of explosive plays (runs of over 12 yards, receptions of over 15), and runs and receptions for first downs and touchdowns.

Last year, Ingram had 87 of his 271 rushes and eight of his 32 pass receptions go for either first downs or touchdowns. For Richardson, 37 of his 145 rushes and eight of his 16 receptions went for first downs or touchdowns.

But it's about more than the yards. Alabama Coach Nick Saban said, "Those guys are obviously great players and great competitors, and I certainly wouldn't take any of the credit for the yards after contact they get. I think from a program standpoint, trying to develop a mental toughness and an attitude on this team they are going to be relentless, they are going to come after you on every play with an intensity the other team can't match, and that's the kind of attitude we try to build on our team. Sometimes we've been able to play that way, and sometimes we haven't, and the more consistent we can be in getting that from our entire team, not just a few individual players, although they set a tremendous example for it, the better chance we'll have to have success, give us a better chance to have success."

Julio Jones is an example of one of those other guys. He is tough for a defensive back to bring down, and his long, strong arms are adept at the stiff arm that gives him extra yards.

Ingram said he doesn't want to be the hittee. He wants to be the hitter.

"It's just the mentality of the position," the junior from Flint, Michigan, said. "I don't want to get hit. I don't want anybody to hit me. I want to hit them first and send a message to them that I don't want them to tackle me anymore. At the end of the play, when I'm getting

corralled and I have nowhere to go, I'm trying to send a message."

Ingram underlined the message of 2009 with his first carry of 2010. On his first play from scrimmage this year, against Duke in the third game of the season (he had missed two games with a knee injury), Ingram went around right end, smashed a potential tackler, and finished with a 48-yard run. He finished the day with 151 yards on just nine carries, the first major college football player to rush for over 150 yards with fewer than 10 rushes in the past five years.

In this year's game at Arkansas, Ingram seemed sure to be stopped short of the goal line as a defender seemed about to push Ingram out of bounds. But Ingram used a stiff arm to knock the defender away, then tip-toed down the sideline and in for the touchdown.

Ingram said, "Yards after contact I think is a mental thing, not letting the first man bring you down, trying to get as many yards as you can, try and make a play when your team needs the play. You just need to make a play for them. It's something mental. I don't think it's something you can work on. You can work on getting your knees up, pad level low."

"When it comes to game time, it's your willingness, your desire to keep getting extra guys, keep fighting, try and make a play for the team."

Richardson may have caused more stadium announcer corrections than any player in Tide history. It is the norm for Richardson to take on the first tackler, then have other defenders pile on. A run that seems to be no more than four yards ends up as eight.

It was revealed by Alabama guard Barrett Jones that Crimson Tide linemen don't have to pancake defenders for Ingram and Richardson to have room to run.

"With our running backs, we cover up guys and make them make arm tackles," Jones said. "Our running backs do a great job of breaking arm tackles. I'm not sure if I've ever seen an arm tackle bring one of them down. The offensive linemen just cover the defenders, force arm tackles, and then leave the safeties and corners for the running backs to take care of. They usually take care of the rest."

Center William Vlachos was remembering a very physical 2009 game against South Carolina. Ingram ran for a Bryant-Denny Stadium 246 yards to lead the Tide win.

"We were lucky to have number 22 (Mark Ingram) in a game like that, to be able to get in the wildcat at the end of the game and get some yards," Vlachos said. "I'll be honest, a lot of the yards he got last year were credited to him, not us."

Ingram says the competition makes them both better.

"We compete every single day," the junior said. "He makes me better. I make him better. It's just nothing but an advantage to our team just to have a one-two punch like that because when I'm in there I'm fresh, he comes in he's fresh. We're both making plays, both being explosive. It's nothing but an advantage to our team,"

"He pushes me, I push him. We both get better by it. He's great. He's like a little brother to me."

Although players like Ingram, Richardson, and Julio fight for extra yardage, they have not been plagued by fumbles. The average is working out to about one fumble per year among Ingram and Richardson. Bama offensive coordinator Jim McEwain said avoiding turnovers "has more to do with what our defense does in daily practice to try to create turnovers, and we have to match that intensity."

And Florida Coach Urban Meyer, who has seen plenty of the two in the past two seasons, has a reasonable theory. "When a guy breaks four tackles on the play," Meyer said, "that means they recruited pretty good running backs."

What It Means To Be Crimson Tide

Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players

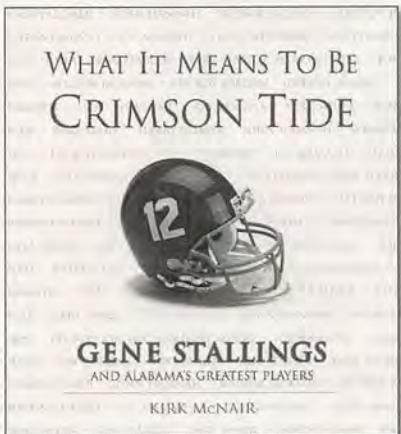
Alabama football means championships and All-America players and, for many, a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 60 Alabama players who performed over a 75-year period tell us "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."

Former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings and 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair selected players who tell the stories of games and practices, coaches and teammates. The story of "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."

Among those featured are Harry Gilmer, Bart Starr, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, Ozzie Newsome, and Jay Barker.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and reveals why he did NOT follow Paul Bryant as Alabama head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

"What It Means To Be Crimson Tide—Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players" is a hardcover book of over 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order (\$27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUD

Soph safety Robert Lester makes big plays

Quietly, Robert Lester has become one of the top performers for the Alabama Crimson Tide secondary. Indeed, quiet may be one of the few drawbacks for the 6-2, 206-pound sophomore safety. Sometimes Lester needs to speak up.

"Robert has done a really good job for us this year," said Crimson Tide Coach Nick Saban. "He's a young player. He got to play for us some last year as a backup. But I think he's really taken up the responsibility of being a starter. He's really taken a lot of pride in doing things correctly."

"He's a really quiet guy so for him to communicate has been something we have emphasized with him because we have to play with that togetherness and communication to eliminate mistakes in the secondary."

Lester made plenty of noise in a meeting of top ten teams early this season. On the road at Fayetteville against 10th-ranked Arkansas, Lester had critical plays against Razorbacks quarterback Ryan Mallett. Mallett, a Heisman Trophy candidate and considered the best quarterback in the Southeastern Conference, had the Hogs in good shape, but was twice thwarted by Lester.

Lester picked off one Mallett pass in the end zone as the Razorbacks were at the Alabama goal line in the second quarter. In the fourth quarter, the Hogs had a 20-17 lead on Bama when Lester made another key interception, returning it 33 yards and setting up the Tide's winning touchdowns.

Along with the two interceptions in the Arkansas game, Lester had seven tackles. He was named Southeastern Conference Defensive Player of the Week and Bronko Nagurski Award National Defensive Player of the Week. Lester was added to the 2010 Nagurski Watch List because of his performances this year. The Bronko Nagurski Trophy will be presented to the best defensive player in college football on December 6 by the Football Writers Association of America.

When Lester became the leader in the SEC in interceptions in the early part of the season, a feat that junior defensive back, Mark Barron accomplished for the overall season last year with seven, Barron laughed and jokingly told him not to take his spotlight.

"I'm happy to see that he's doing good," Barron said. "I told him today though, that he can't just take my prime, I'm not going to let it be that easy. I'm happy to see that he's doing good and happy

that he's doing good so far."

Barron and Lester are both safeties in Alabama's secondary. During fall camp, the two play left and right so they learn the assignments of both the strongside and free safety positions. Once the season began, Barron is the strong safety and Lester the weakside (or free) safety.

Other than learning to speak a little louder, what's the secret to Lester's newfound success?

"Just execution, playing assignment football, and doing what Coach Saban tells us to go out there and do," Lester said. "He tells us to put our hats on the ball; hit the guys and the ball will come out. By playing physical, it will create turnovers. Every game is a confidence booster. The better the game we have, the more confidence we gain."

It might be Lester's first year to start in the Crimson Tide's secondary, but his performances have looked nothing like

a beginner. By the fourth week of the season, he was leading the Southeastern Conference with four interceptions and each game he continues to improve.

Alabama was a good college for Lester to select. "It's always fun being on national TV and making plays like that," said Lester. "Every week since the season started I've told myself I need to get my hands on the ball twice a game. I've been around quite a bit and making plays is just something I've worked on. Just going out there having fun; being able to execute things; being where they're supposed to be; that's the key."

Last season in a national championship year, Lester worked as a backup in the defensive backfield; the previous year he worked on the scout team while redshirting.

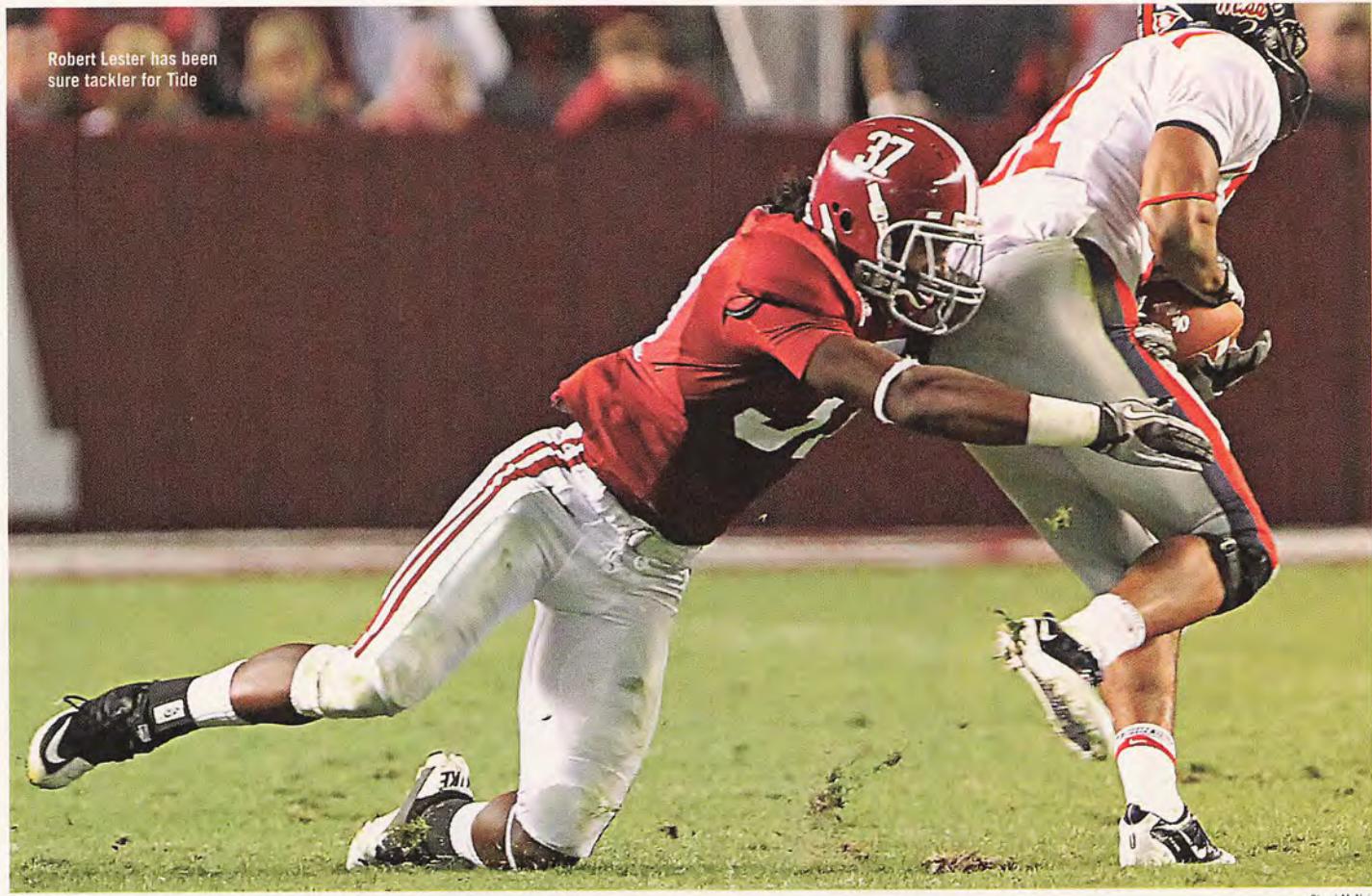
"Robert's come a long way," said junior William Vlachos. "He was on the scout team his freshman year. He always has a great attitude. He's been working really hard and I think everybody's seen how great he's played for us. The interceptions he's made for us came at a time when we really needed them. A lot of credit goes to him and the way he's worked. He has never been discouraged about his spot on the depth chart. He does everything right. He does everything he's told. And it is paying off for him."

Lester appeared in eight games last year, while being a backup in the secondary. His first game was against North Texas where he tallied two tackles and a solo stop. For the season, Lester had eight



Robert Lester took over starting job at safety

Stuart McNair



Stuart McNair

tackles, and six solo stops.

"He's hungry," said sophomore offensive lineman Chance Warmack. "He wants to make plays. We talk to him all the time; he's just hungry. He wants to be a success and when you do that you're successful, visualizing."

Despite being a reserve in the Tide's defensive backfield last season, Lester used the opportunity to learn from Alabama's top defensive backs. Now the situation has changed. Lester's become a teacher to the younger players on the team, just as Rashad Johnson and Javier Arenas were to him.

"Robert's just been the same guy since the day he's gotten here," said sophomore Dont'a Hightower. "He's just one of those guys who is eager to learn. When Rashad Johnson was here he stayed behind Rashad, he stayed in the film room with Rashad. Then the year after that he was in the film room with Javier. Now it seems like he's taken over that role and having the younger guys like DeMarcus Milliner and John Fulton and DeQuan Menzie in the film room with him and helping them out."

"I don't really consider myself being one of the new guys," Lester said. "This is my third year here, and I should be one of the guys ready to step up and play. I learned a lot from some of the older guys who've left this program, guys like Rashad Johnson."

"I might not have had a lot of experience on the field before this season, but I have a lot of knowledge of what to do and what not to do because I've watched the other guys before me."

While working as a reserve and learning from the starters last

year, Lester also was recognized by the Alabama coaching staff as the Special Teams Player of the Week against Tennessee-Chattanooga. Lester has some experience in making big plays on special teams. At Foley High School as a senior, Lester had six punt returns for 86 yards, four kickoff returns for 214 yards, and scored one touchdown.

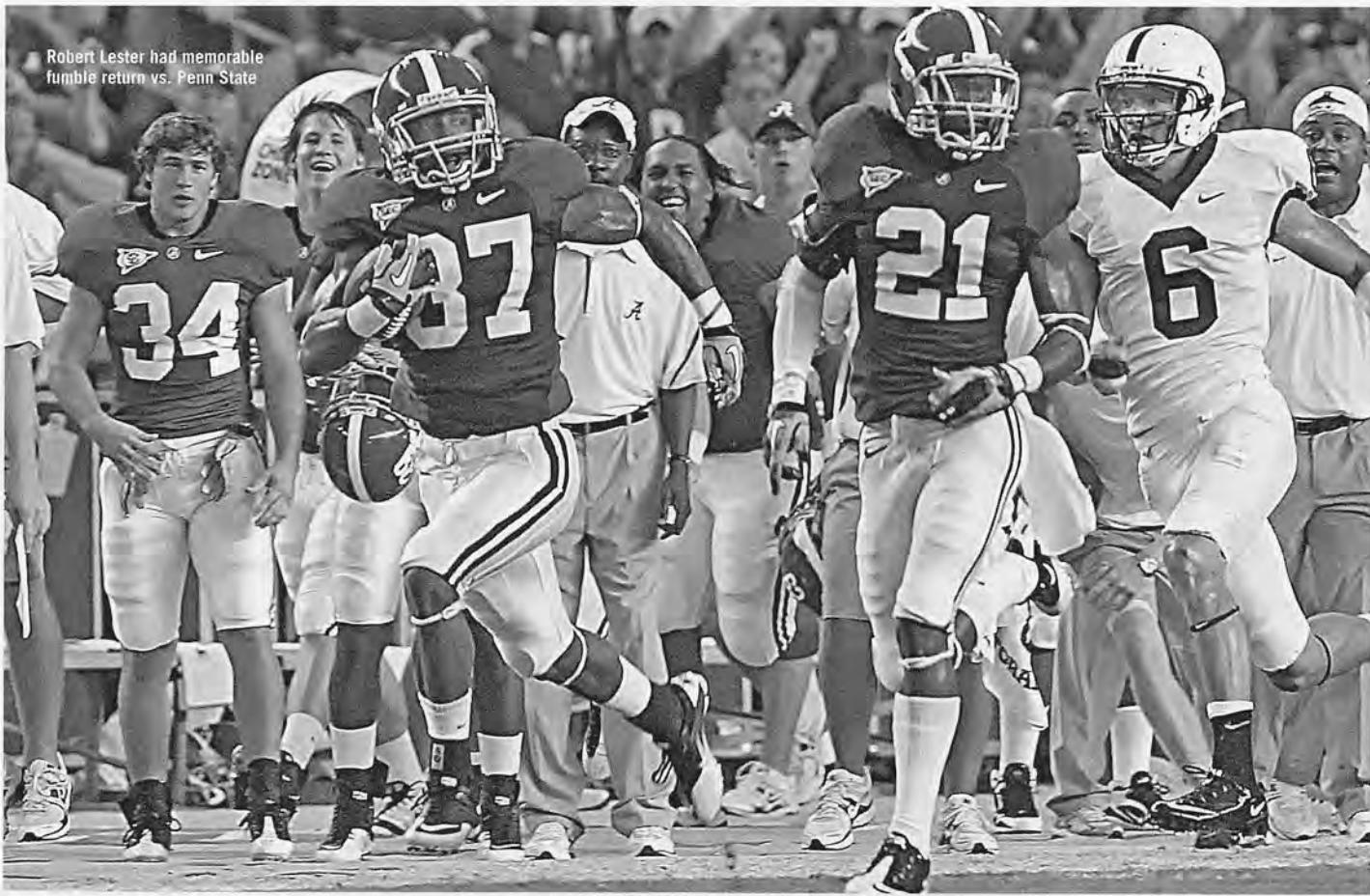
"That says a lot," said junior linebacker Courtney Upshaw. "Hard work comes a long way. He's always pushed himself to get out there in a star role and now that he's there he's contributing and he's there to stay. He's improved by learning more knowledge of the defense and just being able to make plays."

"Our defense is complicated," Lester said. "But anybody can come in and learn it if you'll take the time to study it. You have to educate yourself in this defense and learn from the older guys as you go along. I can tell a big difference in the way we're playing and how fast we're playing compared to when we started the season."

"The way we bounced back against Arkansas should say a lot about our secondary. The main thing now is executing the game plan every week and eliminating our mental errors. That's what's going to take us to being the kind of secondary we all want to be."

As a senior at Foley, Lester was rated a three-star defensive back by Scout.com and was rated number 36 on Scout.com's list of prep defensive backs. He was also named on ScoutSouth.com's Stars of Alabama.

During his 2006 and 2007 seasons at Foley High School as a cornerback, Lester totaled 143 tackles, 10 interceptions, and 15 pass breakups including senior statistics of . But, that wasn't even his senior year. In his final year at Foley High School he had 74



Stuart McNair

tackles, including one TFL. He led his team with six interceptions and 82 return yards. Lester also added 11 pass-breakups, two-forced fumbles, two-blocked punts, and one fumble recovery.

"He's responded," Saban said. "He's got good ball skills. He played cornerback in high school, and those kind of guys normally make good safeties. He's got good size. He's gotten better every game this year. He certainly has become a consistent performer for us and we are pleased with his progress."

Lester's teammates have enjoyed watching him improve from his first year at Bama in 2008 as a redshirt to now.

"Robert has done a great job," said sophomore offensive lineman Barrett Jones. "He's a guy who came in in my class so it's been really fun to watch him step up this year and really become a leader on that defense. He's made a lot of big plays for us this year and you know I'm really happy to see that. He's a great guy. He deserves it. He's been working really hard."

Going from a player who didn't even touch the ball in the 2009 BCS National Championship game to a constant game contributor this year has earned Lester the respect of his team for his hard work in the offseason.

"Robert's improved a lot," said junior wide receiver Darius Hanks. "He was my roommate last year and he's come a long way. This year he's a lot more physical and making plays."

Not only did Lester have to prepare and improve physically to be able to take on a starting role for the number one ranked team in college football, but also he had to build his confidence so that he could become more of a vocal leader on the field.

In Lester's second game ever starting for Alabama he made a play that very few Alabama fans will forget this season. Lester took advantage of a Penn State fumble at the Alabama 9-yard line and returned it 75 yards later at the Penn State 16. A Penn State player stripped Lester from behind, but Tide cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick picked up the ball and took it to inside the 5-yard line, where he fumbled it back to the Nittany Lions. The play took Penn State out of scoring position, costing PSU 89 yards of field position. Lester's return is believed to be the longest fumble return in Alabama history. It is the longest fumble return by a Crimson Tide player since Gerald Dixon returned a fumble 66 yards for a touchdown against Tennessee on October 26, 2002.

In high school, Lester played beside now Alabama teammate, junior wide receiver Julio Jones. Jones and Lester signed their letters of intent on the same day as they both joined the Crimson Tide's 2008 National Signing Day class. (Now Bama has another Foley grad in the starting line-up, redshirt freshman right offensive tackle D.J. Fluker.)

"I always take that mentality, to prove my skills to people," Lester said. "Playing with Julio, I thought it was a great opportunity. I'm going to be a leader. I've got to teach the younger guys what to do and show them the ropes. I've been here two years, and I know what's going on. I know the program and what coach expects. So I'm going to show the younger guys, so if I was to go down, they could be able to take my place."

So far, Lester has become a leader. He proves every day that he has what it takes to be one of the top guys in the Alabama secondary. ■

Out-of-state big men grab Bama's attention

PREP PRO

Take a moment and think about the Alabama football team. Quite a few of the Crimson Tide come from the high schools in Alabama. That has always been the backbone of Crimson Tide success. But the very best Bama football teams have always included players from outside the state, too.

Alabama high school football takes a backseat to no other state in quality. Alabama, however, is a relatively small population state, and so Bama recruiters have always gone out of state to fill needs.

Coach Nick Saban and his staff enjoy a great advantage when foraying out of the state. The name Crimson Tide is perhaps the top college football "brand." Every top prep player knows Alabama football.

Being the 2009 national champion doesn't hurt. And neither does being a regular on national television. All that and more makes Alabama truly a national team, which means the Crimson Tide can recruit nationally with success.

As in every year, Alabama is looking outside the borders. Here are some of the big men – offensive and defensive linemen and linebackers – who are connected with the Crimson Tide.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Alabama has extended early offers to in-state linemen including Spanish Fort center Reese Dismukes and Cullman offensive guard Spencer Region. Dismukes is a solid commitment to Auburn. Region committed to Auburn, but decommitted from the Tigers. He is looking for a college home.

Alabama has reeled in two interior linemen commitments from out-of-state, and their focus is on the outside at the tackle position. The Tide is considered the team to beat for the number one offensive lineman prospect in the country.



Cyrus Kouandjio



Xavier Ward



Ryan Kelly

Does the name Cyrus Kouandjio ring a bell? It should because his brother, Arie, is a freshman offensive tackle for the Crimson Tide. Cyrus is a 6-7, 295-pound tackle from Dematha Catholic in Hyattsville, Maryland. The Scout.com five-star is that number one prospect in the nation among offensive linemen, and it is no surprise that he is a national recruit. He has offers from Penn State, Boston College, and Maryland in the East to Southern Cal in the West and all points in between, North and South.

Although Cyrus plans to take at least five visits, Alabama is considered the team to beat. Cyrus visited Alabama with his brother last January and was impressed. He is considered a possible successor to Bama's James Carpenter at left tackle next season.

"It really has nothing to do with Arie going to school there," said Cyrus. "If I go to Alabama it's because I like Alabama a lot. They are definitely one of my top five schools, but it isn't because my brother goes there. It's because of their offensive line coach, Joe Pendry. That is the number one reason my brother went there. Coach Pendry is a veteran offensive line coach. I trust him, and I know he could teach me the tools to dominate and get to the next level. Coach Pendry is a beast. I like all the coaches down there. My brother has nothing to do with it. I have to make my own choice. I am not going to lie. It is a plus that he is down there. He is my brother, and it's

OSPECTS



Isaac Luatua

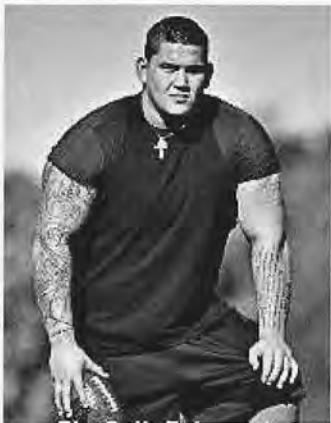
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Xzavier Ward, 6-7, 255, tackle, Colquitt County High School, Moultrie, Georgia, is a Scout.com three-star and the number 37 ranked offensive tackle in the nation. He received an offer from Alabama after camping in Tuscaloosa. Ward has traveled to Tuscaloosa twice this season for the Penn State and Florida game. He will return January 7 for his official visit to The Capstone. There is a great chance Ward becomes a part of the 2011 class for the Tide. He has several offers including Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Notre Dame, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

"What I really like most about Alabama is I have a great relationship with the coaching staff," said Ward.

The Alabama coaching staff put a lot of emphasis on finding a center in this class. They got one in the nation's number two center Ryan Kelly, Scout.com four-star. He is 6-5, 280, and plays at Lakota West High School in West Chesterr, Ohio. Kelly received offers from Alabama, Arizona, Boston College, Cincinnati, Florida, Florida State, Michigan, Syracuse, and Tennessee.

"The decision came down to Alabama and Florida," said Kelly. "Those teams dominate the SEC every year. My head coach told me to put all the other stuff behind me and decide where I would fit in if I didn't play football. I sat down and thought about it. Alabama was



Jesse Williams

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the answer. That's where I really wanted to be. I am not really a center. I have played center, guard and tackle. I think that's why the coaches are so excited. They can get a three-position player in one. Coach Pendry might move me to tackle or guard. I can play wherever. I like center a lot, though. I think center is where I can move on to the next level after college. It doesn't really matter to me though. Guard is easy to me. I played it my sophomore year. I didn't play a lot at tackle. I played three games at tackle last year.

One of the big surprises of the recruiting season, in more ways than one, is Isaac Luatua. He is a 6-3, 298-pound guard at La Mirada High School in California. And he intends to be the first Samoan to play for the Crimson Tide. Luatua, who runs a sub-five-second 40-yard dash, is a Scout.com three-star. He was offered by Alabama in May and committed within a month.

"His goal was to play in the SEC," said La Mirada Coach Mike Moschetti. "When Alabama came out here and won the BCS National Championship Game in the Rose Bowl, it made a big impact on these West Coast guys. He wants to get away from home and play for Coach Saban."

"There just isn't another place like it," said Isaac. "It's a perfect fit. I don't care about depth charts. I'm going to Alabama and the tradition, fan support and the academics were all the determining factors in my decision. I'm going to give everything I've got to The University of Alabama and to the state of Alabama."

Others to watch: Brandon Shell (Goose Creek, S.C.), Bobby Hart (Fort Lauderdale-St. Thomas Aquinas, Fla.), Antonio Richardson (Nashville-Ensworth, Tenn.), Cameron Clear (Memphis-Central, Tenn.).

DEFENSIVE LINE

If Alabama did not collect another commitment for a defensive lineman, the Crimson Tide would still have one of the best defensive

PREP PROSPECTS



LaMichael Fanning



D.J. Pettway



Xzavier Dickson

line classes in the nation. Most believe Alabama is not finished. A few big names remain on the wish list.

The Tide will fill a big need especially at defensive tackle with two monsters arriving in January from junior college.

Jesse Williams, 6-4, 320, Arizona Western College in Yuma, is a Scout.com four-star and the top-rated junior college defensive line prospect in the nation. He committed to Alabama in September after his official visit to The Capstone. He held several offers including Alabama, Arkansas, LSU, Ole Miss, Oklahoma State, Oregon State and Southern Cal. He took an official visit only to Alabama.

The native of Brisbane, Australia, originally committed to Hawaii's recruiting class of 2009, but needed more credits for NCAA eligibility. Williams was named all-conference after one season at Arizona Western. He was a pre-season All-America in 2010. Williams is expected to arrive at Alabama in January and go through spring practice with the Tide. He will have three years to play two at The Capstone.

"A great program and tradition, their recent success, and they have great coaches who have invested their time with me and my family in the process," said Williams. "Coach Saban taking an active role in my recruitment also meant a lot. They have some great exposure and coaches to help progress to next level."

Quinton Dial, 6-5, 310, tackle, could be considered an in-state prospect, but for the past two years he has been at East Mississippi Community College in Scooba. Dial, a Scout.com three-star, signed with Alabama in 2009 out of Clay-Chalkville High School and is a native of Clay. He is expected to graduate in December with three years to play two for the Crimson Tide. He recorded 24 tackles and three sacks in his first season at East Mississippi. He could play defensive end or defensive tackle. He originally picked Alabama over Auburn and Florida.

Tim Jernigan, 6-2, 275, 5.0, tackle, Columbia High School, Lake City, Florida, is a Scout.com five-star and the number two overall player in the country. He has kept a very low profile during the recruiting process, despite being ranked the number one defensive tackle prospect in the nation. He has narrowed his choices to five schools which include Alabama, Florida, Florida State, LSU and Michigan. Jernigan visited Tuscaloosa for the Florida game in early October, and the Gators have been considered the team to beat for his signature. Jernigan recorded 131 tackles during the 2009 season, 12 sacks, three forced fumbles, and recovered three fumbles, two for touchdowns.

"The main thing about all those schools is I grew up watching them," Jernigan told Scout.com. "I did grow up a Florida fan, but I like all of those schools. I am going to make my decision based on where I feel most comfortable. If I feel comfortable with one school I will pull the trigger, but I don't see that happening anytime soon."

Jadeveon Clowney, 6-6, 250, 4.6, end, South Pointe High School, Rock Hill, South Carolina, is a Scout.com five-star and the nation's top prospect. He named Alabama and South Carolina as his favorites in September. Clowney is expected to take all five of his official visits before making a decision. He posted eye-popping stats as a junior, and he is having a terrific senior campaign. His junior stats included 144 tackles, 43 for a loss, 23 sacks, three forced fumbles, 29 quarterback hurries, and four pass breakups.

"They play hard," Clowney told Scout.com "South Carolina [is] in a little trouble right now, so I don't know right now. Still thinking about where I'm going to go. It's a big decision, though."

LaMichael Fanning, 6-7, 270, 5.0, end, Harris County High School, Hamilton, Georgia, Scout.com four-star, has been the traveler in his four years of high school. He started his freshman year at Harris County, but traveled to Calloway High School in Hogansville, Georgia, as a sophomore. He played his junior season at Auburn High School. It was during his time at Auburn when he committed to Alabama. Fanning transferred from Auburn back to Harris County as a senior. Several schools continue to pursue Fanning, and he is expected to take an official visit to Georgia, and possibly others.

"I felt real comfortable at Alabama ever since I attended their camp as a sophomore," said Fanning. "I felt like Alabama was where my heart has always been. Coach Kirby Smart was my recruiting coach. He is a big reason for my commitment."

One of the biggest sleepers in Alabama's class is end D.J. Pettway, 6-2, 255, 4.7, from Catholic High School in Pensacola, Florida. He is a Scout.com three-star.

Pettway burst on the scene during the spring camp circuit, where he dominated. He was particularly impressive at the Badger Sports National 7-on-7 Tournament, where he worked out as a linebacker and rated as one of the top overall defensive performers. He has numerous scholarship offers and Miami and Southern Cal continue to recruit him despite his commitment to Alabama. Last year he had 85 tackles and 12.5 sacks.



Trey DePriest



Shannon Brown



Tony Steward



"My commitment to Alabama is solid," said Pettway. "I love how they all play together and do their part. When you do your part everything is going to come together. We have some good recruits coming in."

Jermauria Rasco, 6-3, 250, 4.6, end, Evangel Christian Academy, Shreveport, Louisiana, is a Scout.com five-star and the number three defensive end prospect in the nation. He is uncommitted, although LSU has always been considered the front-runner. He has kept a low profile, including not including any college games during the season. He visited Alabama and FSU in the summer. Last year he had 109 tackles and 12 sacks.

"The visit to Alabama was real cool," Rasco reported to Scout.com. "I talked to Coach Saban and hung out with a few of the players. It was tight. I felt like I did a good job at the camp. My high school position coach played for Coach Saban at LSU. I have always known him. Coach (Bo) Davis and I have a good relationship and talk a lot."

Xzavier Dickson, 6-4, 248, 4.9, end, Griffin (Georgia) High, is a Scout.com four-star. He has scholarship offers from Alabama, Southern Cal, Florida, Georgia, Miami, and Auburn, among many. He could play defensive end or outside linebacker. He is expected to announce his college decision at the Under Armour All-America game in January. Dickson finished his junior season with 94 tackles, 12 sacks, three interceptions, three fumbles caused, and one fumble recovered for a touchdown. He also had 10 receptions on offense for 200 yards.

"Alabama is a school with great tradition and a great coaching staff," said Dickson. "I like how they stayed poised and didn't buckle when they were down against Arkansas. They really pulled together as a team."

Others to watch: Villami Moala (Sacramento-Grant Union, Calif.), Gabe Wright (Columbus-Carver, Ga.), Phillip Dukes (Manning, S.C.), Lonnie Gosha (Lake Butler-Union County, Fla.), Ishaq Williams (Brooklyn-Lincoln, N.Y.), Terrance Smith (Decatur-Southwest DeKalb, Ga.).

LINEBACKER

Alabama has the number one linebacker class in the country and still has a shot to reel in the top player in the country at the position. The focus has mainly been on out-of-state prospects, but the Tide did land the number six outside linebacker in the country, Brent Calloway, from Russellville.

Trey DePriest, 6-2, 230, 4.69, middle linebacker, Springfield (Ohio) High, a Scout.com five-star and the number four middle

linebacker in the country, chose Alabama over Ohio State. He traveled to both schools several times during the summer with the final visit to Columbus. He then chose the Crimson Tide. DePriest had 101 tackles during the 2009 season, 10 tackles for loss, and seven sacks. He added 812 rushing yards on offense and 13 touchdowns. DePriest expects to graduate in December and enroll at UA for the 2011 spring semester.

"I chose the school where I felt most comfortable," said DePriest. "Maybe it was the Southern hospitality, but I felt most comfortable at Alabama. My family said it was my decision. I want to win a national championship and Butkus Award at Alabama."

Shannon Brown, 6-2, 225, 4.5, middle linebacker, Cook High School, Adel, Georgia, a Scout.com four-star, became the first out-of-state prospect to commit to the Tide last February. Brown had plenty of options including Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, LSU, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Brown missed the last four games of his junior season, but he still led the team with 122 tackles.

"I think their emphasis on academics was the biggest factor in my decision," said Brown. "I like how they want you to leave with a diploma, provide tutoring, and stay on you to do well in the classroom. My commitment to Alabama is solid. I am not talking to any other schools. I love the campus and everything at Alabama. I just love it all."

Tony Steward, 6-1, 215, 4.5, Menendez High School, St. Augustine, Florida, is a Scout.com five-star and the number one middle linebacker prospect in the nation. He took an unofficial visit to Alabama for the Florida game. He has scheduled an official visit back to Tuscaloosa January 7. Clemson and Florida State have been considered the teams to beat, but he remains open with his recruitment. Steward has also scheduled official visits to Clemson, Florida State, and UCLA. He finished 2009 with 121 tackles, five forced fumbles, three defensive touchdowns, and five fumble recoveries.

"My favorite part probably was watching the game," Steward reported to Scout.com after the Florida game. "It was crazy. It was real intense the whole time. That's the best game atmosphere I've ever experienced. They're crazy about football up there."

Others to watch: Denzel Perryman (Coral Gables, Fla.), Curt Maggitt (Dwyer-Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.), Curtis Grant (Richmond-Hermitage, Va.).

Richard Stover contributed to this report

HOT LIST

2011 ALABAMA FOOTBALL PROSPECTS

2011 Alabama Football Prospects as determined by Andrew Bone of 'BAMA Magazine and Scout Media

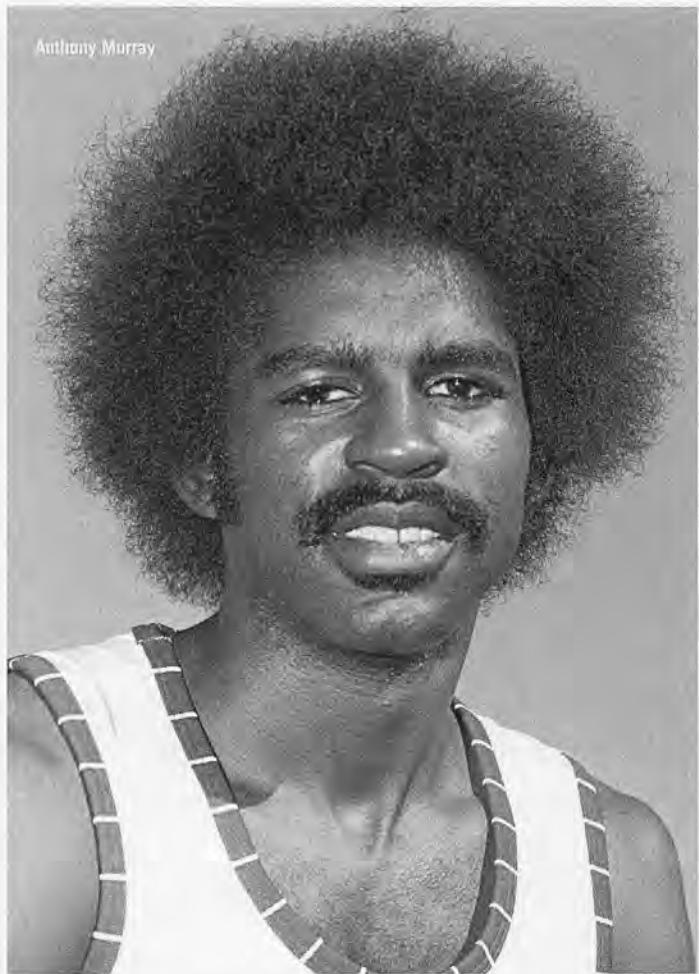
Buck Allen, 6-1, 210, RB, Tallahassee, Fla. (Lincoln)
Devon Blackmon, 6-1, 180, 4.41, WR, Fontana, Calif. (Summit)
Nickolas Brassell, 6-2, 175, WR, Batesville, Miss. (South Panola)
Quan Bray, 5-10.5, 175, RB, Hogansville, Ga. (Calloway)
*Shannon Brown, 6-2, 237, MLB, Adel, Ga. (Cook County)
*Brent Calloway, 6-3, 223, 4.5, OLB, Russellville, Ala.
*Ha'Sean Clinton-Dix, 6-2, 190, S, Orlando, Fla. (Dr. Phillips)
Jadeveon Clowney, 6-5, 235, DE, Rock Hill, S.C. (South Pointe)
*Daryl Collins, 6-0, 190, 4.5, WR, Gadsden, Ala. (Gadsden City)
Isaiah Crowell, 6-0, 210, 4.43, RB, Columbus, Ga. (Carver)
*Trey DePriest, 6-2, 230, OLB, Springfield, Ohio
*Quinton Dial, 6-5, 310, DT, Scooba, Miss. (East Mississippi Community College)
Xzavier Dickson, 6-4, 236, DE, Griffin, Ga.
Ray Drew, 6-4.5, 243, 4.74, DE, Thomasville, Ga. (Thomas County Central)
Phillip Dukes, 6-2, 275, DT, Manning, S.C.
*Phillip Ely, 6-1, 186, 4.57, QB, Tampa, Fla. (Plant)
*Malcolm Faciane, 6-5, 215, TE, Picayune, Miss (Memorial)
*LaMichael Fanning, 6-7, 270, DT, Auburn, Ala.
George Farmer, 6-2.5, 210, 4.38, WR, Gardena, Calif. (Serra)
Erique Florence, 6-3, 185, 4.5, CB, Valley, Ala.
Lonnie Gosha, 6-3, 245, DT, Lake Butler, Fla. (Union County)
Curtis Grant, 6-3, 215, OLB, Richmond, Va. (Hermitage)
Jeremy Hill, 6-1, 215, 4.6, RB, Baton Rouge, La. (Redemptorist)
Tim Jernigan, 6-2, 275, DT, Lake City, Fla. (Columbia)
*Chris Jones, 5-11, 170, CB, Adamsville, Ala. (Minor)
P.J. Jones, 6-3.5, 285, DT, Tupelo, Miss.
*Ryan Kelly, 6-5, 280, OC, West Chester, Ohio (Lakota West)
Cyrus Kouandjio, 6-7, 290, OT, Hyattsville, Md. (Dematha Catholic)
A.C. Leonard, 6-3, 220, TE, Jacksonville, Fla. (University Christian)
Marlin Lane, 6-0, 205, 4.45, RB, Daytona Beach, Fla. (Mainland)

*Issac Luatua, 6-3, 297, OG, La Mirada, Calif.
Curt Maggit, 6-3, 205, DE, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (Dwyer)
Malcolm Mitchell, 6-1, 180, 4.40, WR, Valdosta, Ga.
Villami Moala, 6-3, 340, DT Sacramento, Calif. (Grant Union)
Nick O'Leary, 6-4, 230, TE, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (Dwyer)
Todd Peat, 6-3, 300, DT, Tempe, Ariz (Corona Del Sol)
Denzel Perryman, 5-11, 220, MLB, Coral Gables, Fla.
*D.J. Pettway, 6-2.5, 255, DT, Pensacola, Fla. (Pensacola Catholic)
Josh Pinkston, 6-2, 175, WR, Forest, Miss.
Loucheiz Purifoy, 6-1, 170, CB, Pensacola, Fla. (Pine Forest)
Jermauria Rasco, 6-4, 251, DE, Shreveport, La. (Evangel Christian)
Antonio Richardson, 6-6, 285, OT, Nashville, Tenn. (Ensworth)
Jay Rome, 6-5, 237, TE, Valdosta, Ga.
Brandon Shell, 6-7, 310, OT, Goose Creek, S.C.
*Marvin Shinn, 6-4, 185, 4.5, WR, Prichard, Ala. (Vigor)
Tobias Singleton, 6-2, 175, WR, Madison, Miss. (Madison Central)
Tony Steward, 6-1, 215, 4.5, MLB, St. Augustine, Fla. (Menendez)
*Vinnie Sunseri, 6-0, 205, OLB, Tuscaloosa, Ala. (Northridge)
Damian Swann, 6-0, 175, 4.5, S, Atlanta, Ga. (Grady)
*Bradley Sylve, 5-10.5, 175, 4.40, Port Sulphur, La. (South Plaquemines)
Robensen Therezie, 5-10, 185, 4.55, S, Miami, Fla. (Jackson)
Lateek Townsend, 6-2, 213, OLB, Bennettsville, S.C., (Marlboro County)
Xzavier Ward, 6-7, 255, OT, Moultrie, Ga. (Colquitt County)
*Jabriel Washington, 5-11, 165, 4.45, CB, Jackson, Tenn. (Trinity Christian Academy)
Ishaq Williams, 6-5, 225, DE, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Abraham Lincoln)
*Jesse Williams, 6-4.5, 340, DT, Yuma, Ariz. (Arizona Western)
*Danny Woodson Jr., 6-2, 205, 4.5, WR, Mobile, Ala. (LeFlore)
Gabe Wright, 6-2, 265, DT Columbus, Ga. (Carver)

*Committed to Alabama

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Anthony Murray was no 'Ordinary Joe'



AnTHONY MURRAY was an exceptionally talented prep star, leading Birmingham's Glenn High School to consecutive 3A Alabama state championships. Coincidentally, The University of Alabama's Memorial (now Coleman) Coliseum was the location for the glorious celebrations. Mississippi State had been in hot pursuit of Murray since his junior season, but childhood memories cheering the Crimson Tide coupled with success in Tuscaloosa sealed the native son's commitment to Head Basketball Coach C. M. Newton.

Football played a bit part. Murray said, "I had an uncle who was a member of the Birmingham Parks and Recreation Board. I had a chance to work some of the football games at Legion Field."

Newton's fairness, honesty and respectful manner factored into the decision to don the crimson and white. "He was very knowledgeable about the game," Murray said. "I knew he would be fair about evaluating talent. I really wanted an opportunity to play

right away. I also knew that Ray Odums was leaving. He didn't tell me or promise me I was going to start, but if you looked at the big picture you could see there was an opportunity."

Indeed there was. Amp Murray was a starter early in his freshman season of 1974-75 and went on to be a four-year starter.

Newton, who went on to be a Hall of Fame member, said, "Anthony was probably one of the best defensive players I've ever coached or I've ever seen. He could score off of his defense so much. He was a very good offensive player and could really handle the basketball."

One of Newton's assistants, John Bostick, was the lead recruiter on Murray. Responsible for coaching the guards, the military drills of Bostick's background were incorporated into the daily regiment. The 6-3, 190-pound backcourt man found the tenor of practice serious but rewarding.

"I enjoyed it," Murray said. "It helped improve my game a whole lot."

Bostick returned the compliments saluting the terrific defender always willing to accept the challenge. "Anthony was an unorthodox defensive player," Bostick said. "You would think he was out of position but then all of a sudden he would make the steal. He was an efficient offensive player. He could score but his primary purpose was to get the ball to other folks. He really made a difference in our ball club."

Murray's freshman year saw the Crimson Tide capture the SEC crown and make the program's first appearance in the NCAA Tournament. The Arizona State Sun Devils hosted the first round Western Regional match-up in Tempe—the only NCAA Tournament team that hosted that season. "We didn't win but we made a good showing," Murray said of the 97-94 loss.

Alabama repeated as league champion in 1976, Murray's sophomore season. The NCAA Tournament tended to pair teams geographically as seeding was not yet employed by the selection committee. Heavily favored ACC Champion North Carolina was the first round Mideast Regional opponent. Consensus All-America point guard Phil Ford and four other Tar Heel future NBA number one draft choices were defenseless. Held in Dayton, Ohio, Murray was on Ford like bark on a tree all game limiting him to a meager two points in a 79-64 Crimson Tide thrashing while contributing 13 points offensively.

"I had watched him play all year but he didn't know about me which was an advantage," said Murray. The Tobacco Road team's famous tactic of once in the lead spread the defense by running the four corner offense with the ball handling wizard Ford in the middle breaking down the defender for layups or assists for uncontested easy baskets. Alabama's strategy to stay in front negated any reason to chase. A national TV audience became acquainted with the upstart SEC powerhouse and witnessed the program's inaugural NCAA Tournament victory.

"The coaching staff had a great game plan," Murray said. "That game really put Alabama basketball on the map. It was a statement for The University. It was a big thrill to have been on that team. The game gave Alabama a lot of respect nationwide."

Baton Rouge was the next venue as the Tide faced the top

ranked undefeated Indiana Hoosiers in the regional semifinals. Murray recalled one of the better sequences that day. "Bobby Wilkerson made a spin move coming down the court. I stole the ball from him and he continued to go down the court like he had the ball but I had it going the other way," he said. "Everyone played at an extremely high level. We just had a bad break right there at the end of the game," referring to the controversial charge whistled on Alabama's center Leon Douglas against his Indiana counterpart Kent Benson, who was playing with four fouls. Indiana won 74-69 en route to an undefeated season and the national title.

Murray said, "We came closer to beating them than any other team that year. Indiana's head coach, Bobby Knight, made that statement. Just playing well against the competition on that level, we had a lot to be proud of."

Murray earned a berth on the All-Mideast Regional team.

Murray and teammates completely dominated Auburn during his four-year tenure winning seven out of eight contests. Prolific scorer Eddie Johnson was the opposing guard Murray was assigned to lock down. His outstanding defensive efforts against the celebrated guard earned a complimentary nickname from the Auburn faithful. "They used to call me 'Officer Murray' because I handcuffed Eddie Johnson when we played them," said Anthony. "He was a really good player. I think when I was a freshman he really ripped me down there at Auburn." Responding with a 25-point outburst as a sophomore was a memorable series moment for the 9.3 career scorer.

Facing a substantial double-digit deficit, Bostick recalled a timeout against the Tigers in Tuscaloosa. "I've never seen a more determined guy," Bostick said. "I looked in Anthony's eyes and knew he was going back out there and get after them. He did and we ended up winning the game."

Quick feet and hands combined with long active arms created havoc for the opposing backcourt. He remains the school's single season leader with 79 steals and would certainly be at or among the top for a career if the statistic was officially recorded. Terry Coner is the only other former Crimson Tide player in history to achieve 71.

Michigan found out about Murray's basketball thievery on a December evening in Birmingham. The 10 steals stand as not only the school single game record but tied for an SEC mark. Murray and his three-year backcourt running mate, T.R. Dunn, accumulated steals and bedeviled opponents into turnovers. "I enjoyed that part of the game especially with T.R.," Murray said. "We really would tighten up the defense in the second half to win the games." His single season school record of 2.9 steals per game average as a senior is .7 more per contest than the next closest individual. Naturally he was the 1978 recipient of the Guy Lee Turner Memorial Defensive Award.

Although athleticism significantly contributed to the defensive reputation, the cerebral preparation provided an edge. "Knowing the plays and studying the players," Murray cited as keys to enhancement. C. J. Hansberry, his elementary and high school coach,

is the individual credited for the fastidious approach. "We did our homework. We scouted the teams and the players. After games we wouldn't go home. We would diagram some of the team's plays and go over the strengths and weaknesses of each player in elementary school. We knew their plays better than they did and studied them like a book. When they were calling plays, we already knew it."

A senior co-captain, Murray ranks third in career assists with 463 leading the team every season beginning as a sophomore. Alabama's overall record of 87-26 during his four years included the school's first Sweet Sixteen in 1976, the second highest Final AP ranking of sixth, consecutive SEC titles, and reaching the NIT Final Four. The Final AP poll rankings between 1975-77 of 10th, 6th and 11th are the best three consecutive years in Crimson Tide history. His .494 field goal percentage led the team in 1976. Named third team All-SEC by the AP and UPI in 1976 and 1978, he also won a gold medal competing with teammate Larry Bird as a member of the United States squad at the 1977 World University Games held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

As with most collegians, professional hopes did not pan out. He was a seventh round draft choice of the Philadelphia 76ers, then competed for a year in Washington with the World Basketball Association. He later tried out with Detroit and Atlanta.

Murray then went through a series of management jobs, a situation he does not regret. He said, "It's kind of hard to top the college experience of being with the players and traveling unless you make it in the NBA. You kind of go through life looking and searching to replicate the experience. I guess that's why I was searching around and changing jobs so much. It was just part of life I had to go through."

"I'm happy and content because of the good experience I had at The University of Alabama. The education (his degree is in communications) helped me out and was invaluable in the real world. It was one of the keys to my success," said Murray presently a Marketing Manager with Ignite/Stream Erienergy in Dallas.

He assists customers in the de-regulated energy markets of Texas and Georgia.

Murray moved to the Lone Star state to pursue employment but found a life companion too. His wife, Vivine, is from West Africa. They are parents of Ely, Jaride, Mariel, Noemie, Joseph A. Murray, Jr., Joel and Devin.

The children have heard about their father's basketball stardom from their uncle, Harvie, who played at Ole Miss.

When Murray moved to Texas, he began going by his first name, Joseph or Joe. He was certainly no ordinary Joe at Bama, helping the Tide to its first two NCAA appearances. Murray follows the Tide. He said, "I always want them to do well and be on top. I want them to get that first national championship. Although I was not a part of that I still want them to achieve that goal for the Alabama basketball program."

Newton said, "Anthony has done well with his life and I've always been real proud of him. He was a great player and leader for us at Alabama and a wonderful human being."



Anthony Murray was ambidextrous point guard

University of Alabama

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'BAMA SCORECARD

Notebooking Crimson Tide Sports

ALABAMA VS. MICHIGAN

To the surprise of no one, the rumor has been made official. Alabama will open the 2012 season against Michigan in the stadium of the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas.

Alabama and Michigan, two of the most storied programs in college football history, will play on September 1, 2012, in the Cowboys Stadium Classic. The prime time kickoff will be televised either by ESPN or by CBS.

Alabama and Michigan have played four times previously.

A sidebar topic to the game could be the Crimson Tide going against Michigan Coach Rich Rodriguez. Rodriguez had reportedly made a commitment to leave West Virginia and take the job as Alabama head coach prior to the 2007 season. Rodriguez reneged and Alabama Athletics Director Mal Moore enticed Nick Saban to Bama.

"It's exciting to announce that two of college football's most tradition-rich teams will be meeting in 2012," said Moore. "We have such tremendous respect for Michigan: their school, their outstanding tradition, and their following. It's a terrific opportunity for our student-athletes and our entire program, in addition to being a great benefit in recruiting. It's yet another chance for our University to be showcased on a national stage early in the season at a terrific stadium."

The Alabama-Michigan contest will be the third time since 2008 that the Crimson Tide has opened the season at a neutral site in front of a prime time national television audience. Alabama opened the 2008 and 2009 seasons with victories against ACC opponents Clemson and Virginia Tech, respectively, in the Kickoff Game in Atlanta.

Alabama will be the home team and the Wolverines will be the away team. The game officials will be from the Big 12 Conference.

The three previous meetings between Alabama and Michigan occurred in bowl games. Most recently, Michigan edged Alabama, 35-34, in overtime in the 2000 Orange Bowl. The Wolverines lead the all-time series 2-1.

All of the games have come down to the wire. Alabama's one victory against Michigan was dramatic in that it was the final game as head coach for Gene Stallings, who was chosen for the College Football Hall of Fame this year.

The game will mark the fourth year of a five-year agreement between Cowboys Stadium and ESPN to bring a top college football game to North Texas during the Labor Day weekend to start the college football season. Each contest has featured nationally ranked teams with Brigham Young upsetting the Oklahoma, 14-13, in 2009 and TCU knocking off Oregon State, 30-21, in 2010. LSU and Oregon are set to square off in the 2011 "Cowboys Stadium Classic."

2011 FOOTBALL

Alabama also released its 2011 football schedule, with the surprise the opening game being against the alma mater of Tide coach Nick Saban, Kent State. Here is the schedule:

September 3	Kent State
September 10	@ Penn State
September 17	North Texas
September 26	Arkansas
October 1	@ Florida
October 8	Vanderbilt
October 15	@ Ole Miss
October 22	Tennessee
October 29	Open
November 5	LSU
November 12	@ Mississippi State
November 19	Georgia Southern
November 26	@ Auburn

SATURDAY SHRINE

Sporting News recently selected its top "Saturday Shrines" and Alabama's Bryant-Denny Stadium was listed as the number one college stadium in America. The voting was done by 70 former coaches, current coaches, and broadcasters, who voted based on each school's stadium, fans, city and surroundings, traditions, and history. The latest expansion of Bryant-Denny increased seating capacity to 101,821 and was called "a masterpiece of mixing history and modern updates."

AS SEEN ON TV

How popular is Alabama football? Halfway through the 2010 season, the top three rated college television games had been Alabama vs. Florida, Alabama vs. Arkansas, and Alabama vs. South Carolina.

FOOTBALL ALL-STARS

Those Alabama high school football players who have committed to Alabama and will play in the annual Alabama-Mississippi High School All-Star Game in Mobile on December 11 are:

Brent Calloway (Russellville), Marvin Shinn (Vigor), Danny Woodson (LeFlore), Daryl Collins (Gadsden City) and Christion Jones (Minor).

Kick-off of the game is set for 1 p.m. CST at Ladd-Peebles Stadium.

HAPPY TRAILS

Rumored for weeks to be a member of Glenn "Doc" Rivers staff, Roy Rogers, the former University of Alabama shot-blocking standout, has been officially hired as a Boston Celtics Assistant Coach for the 2010-11 season. For the past two seasons, the Linden, Alabama native was a New Jersey Nets Assistant on the staff of Head Coach Lawrence Franks working with the big men. Rogers had recently been re-assigned as an Advanced Scout with the Nets before accepting the Celtics assistant coaching position. Released by the Nets last November, Franks was hired as an assistant by Boston in July. He recommended his former colleague Rogers who succeeds long-time Assistant Coach Clifford Ray.

TICKET PLANS

The University of Alabama athletic ticket office has announced the availability of several men's basketball season tickets plans as well as three-game mini-plans for the upcoming 2010-11 season.

Fans can purchase season tickets for all 18 home dates at one of two price options. For \$235, a seat can be purchased along either sideline above the Tide Pride seating or along the baseline above the Tide Pride sections. For \$150 - less than \$9 per game - a seat can be reserved in the upper corner sections of Coleman Coliseum.

The ticket office has also created season ticket plans aimed directly at young alumni and UA parents with both groups being able to purchase season tickets in the \$235 sections for \$150. Fans who cannot make it to Coleman Coliseum to support the Tide for every game can purchase one of two SEC mini-plans that features three marquee games for \$45. The SEC East mini-plan includes the Kentucky, South Carolina and Georgia games while the SEC West mini-plan features Auburn, Mississippi and Mississippi State. Fans are encouraged to purchase mini-plans early and keep in mind that any available individual-game tickets for the Kentucky and Auburn games will not go on sale until December 20.

The Family Fun Pack will return again in 2010-11 for the Tide's non-conference games. For \$40, the Family Fun Pack features four tickets and four concession vouchers which are redeemable for a hot dog, bag of chips and soft drink from the concourse concessions stands.

To purchase season tickets, contact the Alabama ticket office, located in the lobby of Coleman Coliseum, at 205-348-BAMA or online at www.RollTide.com.

TIDE WOMEN ROLLING

The Alabama women's golf team of Coach Mic Potter is on a roll. For the first time in program history, Bama was ranked the number one team in the nation after winning the prestigious NCAA Fall Preview on September 13-15 at the Traditions Golf Club in Bryan, Texas, which will host the 2011 NCAA Championship. The Tide got 21 of 30 first place votes.

Alabama shot a school-record 15-under-par 849 to edge SEC foe LSU by one shot at the NCAA Fall Preview. Two Crimson Tide players - Brooke Pancake and Camilla Lennarth - carded 65s (-7) during the tournament while Jennifer Kirby shot a final-round 66. All three players finished in the top 10.

In its next tournament, the Tide women showed they could handle the pressure of being number one.

Alabama completed a wire-to-wire victory at the Tar Heel Invitational in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with a record-shattering 28-under-par total of 836 on the par-72, 6,285-yard UNC Finley Golf Course.

How did Bama do it? In the first round the Tide shot a school record 10-under par. In the second round, the Tide bested that mark with a 15-under par score.

In the final round, Bama shot a steady 3-under-par 285 for the win. The Alabama score beat the previous tournament record by 14 strokes.

LSU was again second to the Tide, trailing by 12 strokes.

Alabama junior Brooke Pancake captured medalist honors by winning the second playoff hole against LSU's Megan McChrystal. Both shot 11-under-par 205 over 54 holes, which is a career low for Pancake.

Senior Camilla Lennarth finished one shot back of Pancake and McChrystal in third place. Lennarth fired a 2-under-par 70 in the final round to set her 54-hole career best at 10-under-par 206. She shot 69 and 67 in the first two rounds. Lennarth and Pancake both have their season scoring averages below 70 with Lennarth checking in at 69.56 and Pancake one stroke back at 69.67.

Jennifer Kirby completed her 54 holes in 6-under-par 210, which is also a new career low for the sophomore from Paris, Ontario, Canada. Kirby shot a 1-under-par 71 on Sunday in an up-and-down round that saw her sink seven birdies, make four bogeys and a double bogey.

True freshman Stephanie Meadow finished tied for 21st at 1-under-par 215. She shot 1-over 73 in the final round after an opening-round 72 and a career-low 2-under-par 70 in round two. Senior Courtney Harter shot 77 on Sunday at finished tied for 66th at 11-over-par 227.

UPSET OF AUBURN

No one saw this coming. The Alabama men's swimming and diving team opened its 2010-11 season Saturday by beating Auburn 133-110, winning eight of nine individual swimming events to pull off the stunning victory. Auburn has won six of the past eight NCAA championships.

"The guys have had this one circled on their calendars," Tide Coach Eric McIlquham said. "They did a great job today. We haven't beaten Auburn since 1993 and they've won six out of the last eight national titles, so this is a really good place for our guys to be right now."

After finishing second in the 200 medley relay by nine-hundredths of a second, Alabama's men went on to win nine of the next 10 races including the 800 freestyle relay to close out the meet. "Obviously this is really early in the season and there are a lot of things we need to work on and continue to improve on, but this was a great way to begin the season at home," McIlquham said. Senior Catalin Cosma got the winning started in the 1000 freestyle with a time on 9:26.90. He completed the sweep of the distance events by taking first in the 500 freestyle in 4:33.01 as well as swimming and leg on the winning 800 freestyle relay.

Junior Joe Ziegler also got his season off to a fast start, winning two individual events and anchoring the Tide to a win in the 800 freestyle relay to close things out. He clocked a 1:40.48 to win the 200 freestyle and then came back and took first in the 200 backstroke with a 1:48.62.

In his first individual race freshman Vlad Caciuc won the 50 freestyle with a time of 20.60. In the 200 butterfly, Alabama was dominant, sweeping the first three places led by freshman Alex Coci's winning 1:50.60, followed closely by sophomore Anestis Arampatzis' 1:50.91 and freshman Hunter Hinson's 1:51.07. The Tide went one-two in the 100 freestyle with freshman BJ Hornikel taking the win with a 45.19 followed by Caciuc's 45.64.

The Tide closed out the win with a down-to-the-wire victory in the 800 freestyle relay. Hornikel, Ziegler, Cosma, and junior Gilles Gutnecht battled up and down the pool with Auburn's A relay, out touching the Tigers by nine-hundredths of a second with a 6:43.83.

Hornikel, a native of Goose Creek, South Carolina, was named SEC Freshman of the Week for his performance.

ON U.S. NATIONAL YOUTH TEAM

Alabama freshman Hunter Hinson has earned a place on the United States National Youth Team the sport's governing body, USA Swimming, announced in Colorado Springs this week.

The mission of the National Youth Team is to identify the top swimmers in the United States ages 13-18 and support their development and preparation to eventually represent the United States in the Olympic Games. The 2009-10 National Youth team is made up of 105 of the nation's top young swimmers.

Hinson, who made the finals of the 200-meter butterfly at this summer's U.S. Senior National Championships in Irvine, Calif., hails from Cairo, Ga. A three-time high school All-American, Hinson holds four Georgia Independent School Association state records.

Hinson's fellow Tide freshman Callan Buck made her Team USA debut earlier this month when she dove at the World Junior Championships, finaling off the 3-meter board. Hinson and Buck, along with their Alabama teammates get the collegiate season underway at home Saturday, Oct. 19 against Auburn in the Alabama Aquatic Center.

WOMAN OF YEAR FINALIST

Former Alabama softball All-American Brittany Rogers (Dacula, Ga.) was selected as one of nine finalists for the 2010 NCAA Woman of the Year award. Rogers becomes the fifth athlete from the University of Alabama to be honored as a finalist.

The Woman of the Year award honors female student-athletes who have distinguished themselves throughout their collegiate career in the areas of academic achievement, athletics excellence, community service and leadership.

"This is a tremendous honor for Brittany and our program," Coach Pat Murphy said. "To be one of nine finalists for an award like this speaks volumes about the kind of person Brittany is. It is certainly a high water mark for Crimson Tide softball."

A committee of representatives from NCAA schools and conferences selected the top nine finalists from a pool of 30 honorees. Those individuals were identified from an initial pool of 452 conference and independent honorees representing all three NCAA divisions and multiple sports.

Rogers joins gymnasts Michelle Reeser (2005), Kristin Sterner (2003), Merritt Booth (1998) and Meredith Willard (1997) as Alabama's finalists for the NCAA Woman of the Year Award.

The Woman of the Year is the second major honor bestowed upon Rogers by the NCAA after earning the prestigious Top VIII award earlier this year. The Top VIII recognized eight NCAA student-athletes who have completed their athletic eligibility for their success on the fields and courts, in the classroom and in the community.

A four-year starter, Rogers helped Alabama register three top-10 national finishes and guided the Tide to three Women's College World Series berths, including back-to-back semifinal appearances in 2008 and 2009. She also helped guide Alabama to the 2006 SEC championship and three SEC Western Division titles.

She was selected as an All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association and Easton for four straight years, becoming just the third UA player to nab the honors all four seasons. She finished her Alabama career ranked first in stolen bases, second in batting average, runs and hits and fifth in on-base percentage. In 2009, she played as part of the United States National team in the Japan Cup, helping USA to a gold medal.

Off the diamond her accolades were just as impressive. Rogers was the recipient of an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship and an SEC Boyd McWhorter Postgraduate Scholarship. She was the winner of the 2009 Paul Bryant Student-Athlete Award, which is presented to the top male and top female student-athlete at Alabama.

She served as president of Alabama's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and volunteered with multiple community organizations such as Project Angel Tree, Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, Easter Seals walk and visited various local elementary and high schools.

PITCHING IN

When the Major League Baseball postseason began October 6, three former Alabama standouts were a part of the hunt for a World Series Championship.

Representing Alabama in the playoffs were pitchers Lance Cormier (Tampa Bay Rays), Tommy Hunter (Texas Rangers) and David

Robertson (New York Yankees).

Five total former UA players have played in the World Series while two – Joe Sewell and Robertson – have won three total rings.

STADIUM TOURS

The University of Alabama Athletics Department will be conducting tours of Bryant-Denny Stadium. Tours begin at 10:30 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday. The first 25 individuals will be accommodated for each time slot. Groups will be merged as needed to fill each tour time slot. No weekend or after hours tours will be available. Tours will be unavailable when The University observes holiday hours. Tours will also be unavailable on Fridays prior to home football games.

Tours will be provided on a first-requested, first-served basis at a rate of \$5 per person. There will be no charge for children under the age of 1. Walk-up requests may be available depending upon availability. You may check availability by visiting the merchandise tent located in Bryant-Denny Stadium's South Market area.

Flash cameras will be allowed, but video is not permitted.

Bryant-Denny Stadium is ADA accessible.

Tours will begin in the South Market area of Bryant-Denny Stadium and proceed to the Donor Hall of Recognition, Stadium Club, South Zone, Skybox, Press box, Recruiting Room, Home Locker Room, 50-Yard Line entry to the field (home team sideline) for a photo opportunity, and exit to the South Market area.

Groups that are considered non-profit organizations or schools may obtain a group rate of \$2 per person. For complete information visit www.RollTide.com.

TENNIS ADDITION

Former tennis All-American Jay Weinacker joined the Alabama men's tennis coaching staff as a volunteer assistant, head coach Billy Pate announced. Weinacker replaces Paul Thoesen, who served in the same capacity for two years and has recently accepted the head position at the Savannah Yacht Club. Weinacker, a native of Birmingham, was an accomplished player for North Carolina State 2005-09. He finished his career as the school's record holder in career singles victories with 106, as well as being tied for the school record with 87 doubles wins.

Weinacker qualified for the NCAA Doubles Championship in 2008 and the NCAA Singles Championship in 2009. He reached the Round of 16 in the Singles Championship, earning All-America and ranked No. 33 in the nation.

In addition to serving as a volunteer assistant at Alabama, Weinacker is also the assistant pro at Pine Tree Country Club in Birmingham. ■

2010-11 ALABAMA FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	SERIES RECORD	LAST GAME
September 4	San Jose State	Tuscaloosa	First Meeting	N/A
September 11	Penn State	Tuscaloosa	UA leads 8-5-0	1990, PSU 9, UA 0
September 18	Duke	Durham, N.C.	UA leads 2-1-0	2006, UA 30, Duke 14
September 25	Arkansas	Fayetteville	UA leads 13-7-0	2009, UA 35, Ark 7
October 2	Florida	Tuscaloosa	UA leads 22-14-0	2009, UA 32, UF 13
October 9	South Carolina	Columbia	UA leads 11-3-0	2009, UA 20, SC 6
October 16	Ole Miss	Tuscaloosa	UA leads 46-9-2	2009, UA 22, UM 3
October 23	Tennessee	Knoxville	UA leads 47-38-7	2009, UA 12, UT 10
October 30	Open			
November 6	LSU	Baton Rouge	UA leads 45-23-5	2009, UA 24, LSU 15
November 13	Mississippi State	Tuscaloosa	UA leads 74-17-3	2009, UA 31, MSU 3
November 18	Georgia State	Tuscaloosa	First Meeting	N/A
November 26	Auburn	Tuscaloosa	UA leads 40-33-1	2009, UA 26, AU21
December 4	SEC Championship	Atlanta	UA 3 Wins, 4 Losses	2009, UA 32, Florida 13
January 10, 2011	BCS Championship	Glendale, Ariz.	UA 1 Win, 0 Loss	2009, UA 37, Texas 21

2011 ALABAMA

WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE

MEN'S BASKETBALL

DATE	OPP.	TIME*
Nov. 2	Talladega (exh)	TBA
Nov. 8	UAH (exh)	TBA
Nov. 12	Florida A&M	TBA
Nov. 15	Troy Paradise Jam, Virgin Islands	TBA
Nov. 19	Seton Hall	7:30
Nov. 20	Iowa or Xavier	5:00 or 7:30
Nov. 22	TBA	TBA
Nov. 27	Alabama A&M	TBA
Dec. 1	South Alabama	TBA
Dec. 4	@ Purdue	2:30
Dec. 11	@ Providence	1:00
Dec. 15	Southeastern Louisiana	TBA
Dec. 28	Pepperdine	8:00
Jan. 3	Toledo	TBA
Jan. 8	@ Mississippi State	3:00
Jan. 12	South Carolina	8:00
Jan. 15	@ Arkansas	12:30
Jan. 18	Kentucky	8:00
Jan. 22	@ Auburn	5:00
Jan. 29	LSU	7:00
Feb. 2	Mississippi State	7:00
Feb. 5	@ Tennessee	4:00
Feb. 10	@ Vanderbilt	8:00
Feb. 12	Ole Miss	3:00
Feb. 17	@ LSU	8:00
Feb. 19	Arkansas	6:00
Feb. 23	Auburn	7:00
Feb. 26	@ Ole Miss	3:00
March 1	@ Florida	6:00
March 5	Georgia	12:30
March 10-	SEC Tournament	
March 13	@ Georgia Dome, Atlanta	

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

DATE	OPP.	TIME*
Nov. 6	UAH (exh)	2:00
Nov. 12	Tennessee State	5:00
Nov. 14	Central Arkansas	2:00
Nov. 17	North Carolina St	6:00
Nov. 19	@ Georgia Southern	6:00
Nov. 23	McNeese State	6:00
	Junkanoo Jam @ Freeport, Bahamas	
Nov. 26	FSU	7:00
Nov. 27	Arizona State	
	or Providence	4:45 or 7:00
Dec. 1	Alabama State	5:00
Dec. 4	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	2:00
Dec. 12	@ Kansas	2:00
Dec. 18	Belmont	2:00
Dec. 20	Alabama A&M	11:30
Dec. 28	@ Southern Miss	7:00
Jan. 2	Auburn	2:00
Jan. 6	@ Tennessee	6:00
Jan. 9	@ LSU	2:00
Jan. 13	Vanderbilt	6:00
Jan. 16	Arkansas	2:00
Jan. 20	Georgia	8:00
Jan. 23	@ South Carolina	1:00
Jan. 27	@ Florida	6:00
Jan. 30	Kentucky	2:00
Feb. 3	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Feb. 6	@ Georgia	1:00
Feb. 13	Florida	1:00
Feb. 17	@ Auburn	6:00
Feb. 20	Ole Miss	2:00
Feb. 24	Mississippi State	6:00
Feb. 27	@ Arkansas	2:00
March 3-6	SEC Tournament @ Nashville	

GYMNASISTICS

DATE	OPP.	TIME*
Jan. 7	Penn State	7:30
Jan. 14	@ Arkansas	7:00
Jan. 21	@ Boise State	7:30
	Metroplex Challenge	
Jan. 29	LSU, Nebraska, Missouri @ Fort Worth	
Feb. 4	@ Florida	6:00
Feb. 11	Auburn	7:30
Feb. 18	Kentucky	7:30
Feb. 25	@ Georgia	6:30
March 4	@ Michigan	6:00
March 11	LSU	7:30
March 19	SEC Championships @ Birmingham	
April 2	NCAA Regionals	
April 15-	NCAA Championships	
April 17	@ Cleveland	

SWIMMING & DIVING

DATE	OPP.	TIME*
Oct. 9	Auburn	1:00
Oct. 23	LSU	1:00
Nov. 18-20	@ UT Invitational	
Dec. 2-4	@ USA Short Course Columbus, Ohio	
Dec. 16-18	@ LSU Diving Classic	
Jan. 15	@ Kentucky	TBA
Jan. 22	Florida State	TBA
Jan. 29	South Carolina & Georgia @ Columbia	TBA
Feb. 11-13	SEC Diving @ Gainesville	
Feb. 16-19	SEC Swimming @ Gainesville	
Feb. 26	@ Georgia Invite	
March 5-6	@ Auburn Invite	
March 11-13	NCAA Zone Diving	
March 17-	Women's NCAA	
March 19	@ Austin, Texas	
March 24-	Men's NCAA	
March 26	@ Minneapolis	

*Times central and subject to change

2010 ALABAMA

FALL SPORTS SCHEDULE

VOLLEYBALL

Date	Opp.	Time*
	Hawkeye Challenge @ Iowa City, Iowa	
Aug. 27	Iowa	7:00
Aug. 28	Green Bay	4:30
Aug. 29	Southern Illinois	11:30
	Bama Bash	
Sept. 3	Toledo	Noon
Sept. 3	Furman	7:00
Sept. 4	UAB	1:00
Sept. 7	Alabama A&M	7:00
	Century Link Premier @ San Marcos, Texas	
Sept. 10	North Texas	10:00
Sept. 10	Tennessee-Martin	5:00
Sept. 11	Texas State	2:00
Sept. 17	@ Ole Miss	7:00
Sept. 24	LSU	7:00
Sept. 26	Arkansas	1:30
Oct. 1	@ Georgia	6:00
Oct. 3	@ Auburn	1:30
Oct. 8	Florida	7:00
Oct. 10	South Carolina	1:30
Oct. 15	@ Kentucky	6:00
Oct. 17	@ Tennessee	12:30
Oct. 20	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Oct. 24	Ole Miss	1:30
Oct. 29	@ Arkansas	7:00
Oct. 31	@ LSU	1:30
Nov. 5	Tennessee	7:00
Nov. 7	Kentucky	1:30
Nov. 12	@ South Carolina	6:00
Nov. 14	@ Florida	12:30
Nov. 19	Auburn	7:00
Nov. 21	Georgia	1:30
Nov. 24	Mississippi State	4:00

SOCCER

Date	Opp.	Time*
Aug. 20	Samford	7:00
Aug. 22	@ UAB	6:00
Aug. 28	Furman	7:00
Sept. 5	Chattanooga	1:00
Sept. 10	@ Memphis	
Sept. 12	MTSU	1:00
Sept. 17	Texas Tech	7:00
Sept. 24	Ole Miss	7:00
Sept. 26	Mississippi State	1:00
Oct. 1	@ LSU	7:00
Oct. 3	@ Arkansas	1:00
Oct. 8	Florida	7:00
Oct. 10	South Carolina	1:00
Oct. 15	@ Kentucky	6:00
Oct. 17	@ Vanderbilt	2:00
Oct. 21	Georgia	7:00
Oct. 24	@ Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 29	@ Auburn	7:00
April 28	Georgia Tech	6:00
May 1	Tennessee (2)	1:00
May 2	Tennessee	1:00
May 8	@ Mississippi State (2)	1:00
May 9	@ Mississippi State	1:00

MEN'S GOLF

Date	Event	
Sept. 10-12	Carpet Capital	Rocky Face, Ga.
Sept. 17-19	Illinois Invite	Olympia Fields
Oct. 11-12	Jerry Pate @ Old Overton	
Oct. 24-26	Isleworth	Windermere, Fla.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Date	Event	
Sept. 13-15	Fall Preview	Bryan, Texas
Sept. 24-26	Mason Rudolph	Franklin, Tenn.
Oct. 8-10	Tar Heel Invite	Chapel Hill, N.C.
Nov. 5-7	Pac 10-SEC Challenge	Stanford, Calif.

MEN'S TENNIS

Date	Opp.
Sept. 17-19	Olympia Fields @ Chicago
Sept. 24-26	Southern @ Athens, Ga.
Oct. 1-10	D'Novo/ITA @ Tulsa
Oct. 22-25	Wilson/ITA
Nov. 5-7	Crimson Tide Fall
Nov. 5-8	USTA National @ Flushing, N.Y.
Nov. 12-14	Lakewood Ranch at Sarasota

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Date	Opp.
Sept. 10-12	SEC Coaches @ Auburn
Sept. 17-19	Duke Invitational
Sept. 24-26	Roberta Alison Classic
Oct. 2-10	ITA Riviera @ Los Angeles
Oct. 22-25	ITA Southern @ Birmingham
Nov. 4-7	ITA National @ Flushing, N.Y.

CROSS COUNTRY

Date	Event
Sept. 3	Belmont @ Nashville (W)
Sept. 10	Chattanooga Invite (M)
Sept. 18	Crimson Classic
Oct. 1	Notre Dame Invite
Oct. 16	Pre-NCAA @ Terre Haute, Ind.
Nov. 1	SEC Championships @ Columbia
Nov. 13	NCAA South Regional @ Birmingham
Nov. 22	NCAA @ Terre Haute, Ind.

ROWING

Date	Event	
Oct. 9	Chattanooga Head	
Oct. 23-24	Head of Charles	Cambridge, Mass.
Oct. 16	Hobbs Island	Huntsville
Oct. 30	Secret City	Oak Ridge, Tenn.
Nov. 6	Hooch	Chattanooga

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